UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA LIBRARY
X030789833
Digitized by Google
Original from
UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

CHARLOTTESVILLE

LIBRARY OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

GIFT OF
A. M. Brechin.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

Digitized by Google

Original from
UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

Digitized by Google

Original from
UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

Digitized by Google

Original from
UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

Digitized by Google

Original from
UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

THE

MODERN TRAVELLER.

VOLUME THE ELEVENTH.

BURMAH, SIAM, &c.

Digitized by Google

Original from
UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

Digitized by Google

Original from
UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

Digitized by Google

Original from
UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

Map of INDO-CHINA,

Engraved for

THE MODERN TRAVELLER.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

THE

MODERN TRAVELLER.

A

DESCRIPTION,

GEOGRAPHICAL, HISTORICAL, AND TOPOGRAPHICAL,

OF THE

VARIOUS COUNTRIES OF THE GLOBE.

IN THIRTY VOLUMES.

By JOSIAH CONDER.

VOLUME THE ELEVENTH.

UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

LONDON:

JAMES DUNCAN, 37, PATERNOSTER-ROW.

MDCCCXXX.

Digitized by Google

Original from
UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

4 C63
.C6
v.11
1830
202447

LONDON:
Printed by W. CLOWES,
Stamford-street.

Digitized by Google
Original from
UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

CONTENTS.

BIRMAH.

	PAGE
BOUNDARIES	1
GENERAL VIEW OF INDO-CHINA	1
ORIGIN OF THE BIRMANS	14
HISTORY OF THE BIRMAN EMPIRE	22
POPULATION AND NATIONAL CHARACTER	56
LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE	65
MANNERS AND CUSTOMS	75
HISTORY OF BUDDHISM	91
ECCLESIASTICAL SYSTEM	111
RANGOON	117
FROM RANGOON TO PROME	142
PEGU	161
MARTABAN	176
FROM PROME TO AMARAPURA	184
PAH-GAHN	197
AVA	205
AMARAPURA	208
ASSAM	245
ARRACAN	251
REFLECTIONS ON THE LATE WAR	259

Digitized by Google

Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

SIAM.

PAGE

BOUNDARIES 265
HISTORY OF SIAM 266
BANKOK 275
MANNERS AND CUSTOMS 291
YUTHIA 299
CHANTIBOND 304

ANAM.

BOUNDARIES 313
PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY 325
VOYAGE UP THE DON-NAI RIVER 333
SAIGON 336
TURON 339
MANNERS AND CUSTOMS 340
HUE 362

DIRECTIONS FOR PLACING THE PLATES.

Map of Indo-China.....to face the Title.
Birman Costume 214
Imperial Court at Amarapura 221
Cochin Chinese Shipping..... 359

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

THE

MODERN TRAVELLER,

ETC. ETC.

BIRMAH.

[An empire lying between the parallels of 8° and 27° N., and between long. 91° 30′ and 102° E.; bounded, on the N., by the Brahmapootra and Tibet; on the E. by China, Laos, Siam, and the Gulf of Siam; on the S. by the Gulf of Martaban and Malacca; on the W. by the Bay of Bengal and British India.*]

We have at present no geographical name, in general use, for the vast region of Asia which lies between British India and the Chinese territory, comprehending the Birman empire, the kingdoms of Siam and Anam (or Cochin China), and the peninsula of Malacca. The appellation of Ultra Gangetic India is far from being appropriate, since the Ganges forms no part of its western boundary. It has sometimes been denominated the Ultra Gangetic Peninsula, in contradistinction from what is improperly called the Peninsula of India; but, although it terminates in a sort of double peninsula, it will be seen, from a

* These were the boundaries of Birmah at the commencement of the present war; and we have therefore deemed it proper to adhere to them, although it appears probable that the empire will in future be circumscribed on every side within much narrower limits.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

glance at the map, that the Malay country, the Golden Chersonesus of the ancients, is alone entitled to the appellation improperly extended to this immense portion of the Asiatic continent. An objection lies against all compound words; yet, as the adjective Indo-Chinese has already come into extensive use,* the most unexceptionable generic appellation would seem to be INDO-CHINA, understanding by that term the country lying between the Indian and the Chinese seas.† The whole of the western part, having recently been comprised in the Birman empire, may conveniently be designated by that of Birmah.

This vast region has till of late been scarcely known to Europeans, except along its shores; and the interior is still for the most part a *terra incognita*. The whole, however, appears to be formed by four or five ranges of mountains, proceeding from Tibet, which, running southward in parallel directions, divide it longitudinally into the magnificent valleys watered by four great rivers: the Irrawaddy, or river of Ava; the Thaluayn, or Martaban river; the Mei-nam, or river of Siam; and the Mei-kong, or Cambodia river. Besides these, there are several considerable streams of shorter course, and valleys of a subordinate rank,

* Dr. Leyden has sanctioned this word in his Dissertations on the Language and Literature of the Indo-Chinese nations; and a small periodical publication commenced at Malacca in 1817, bears the title of "The Indo-Chinese Gleaner."

† M. Malte Brun was disposed at one time to adopt this word; but in the edition of his Geography now in progress, he proposes to substitute for it the uncouth compound Chin-India; assigning as his reason, that the country is not an Indo China—a China resembling India, but rather a Chinese India—an India with Chinese features. This distinction is far from being accurate if applied to the eastern part of the country, which is altogether of a Chinese character; and we regret that he has not adhered to what we deem in every respect the preferable appellation.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

which will claim description, but do not form distinguishing features of the country. Of the five chains which are believed to exist, that which separates the Birman empire from Bengal and the plains of Chittagong, becomes gradually lower in the kingdom of Arracan, and is lost in small hills before it reaches Cape Negrais. It is known to the Birmans under the name of *Anou-pec-tou-miou*, or the great western hilly country. Its distance from the coast varies from ten to a hundred miles. Of that which separates the valley of Ava from the basin of the Thaluayn, little is known. The principal range, surpassing all the others in height as well as length, appears to be that which separates Ava and Pegu from the great valley of the Mei-nam, and stretching along the whole peninsula of Malacca, terminates in Cape Romania, the southernmost point of Asia. The valley of Siam is separated from the river of Cambodia by a fourth range, which is said to unite with the mountains of China in lat. 22°, and almost reaches the sea near the river of Chantibond.* From Cape Liant, the coast takes a S.E. direction to Cambodia Point, which is formed of low land. The fifth and last chain, one of the most considerable in Asia, proceeds from Yun-nan in China, and taking a south-easterly direction, forms the western boundary of Tonking and Cochin China.

The first of these rivers, the Irrawaddy (Erawady, Era Wuddey, A-rah-wah-tee),† divides the territory

* "Chantibond is a mountainous country, forming the eastern boundary of the kingdom of Siam, dividing it from Cambodia, and situated at the head of the Gulf of Siam. The passage thence to Cambodia is of short distance, a ridge of mountains dividing the two countries."—FINLAYSON'S *Siam*, p. 255.

† Malte Brun supposes the Irrawaddy to be the Ken-poo of Thibet; the Tsan-poo, which D'Anville considered as identical with the river of Ava, being the Brahmapootra. It is believed to

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

of the Birmans into two unequal parts. To the eastward, they possess a tract of ten days' journey, about 150 miles, to the banks of the Thaluayn,* which forms the proper boundary towards Siam. Very little of the tract of country between these two mighty rivers is either cultivated or inhabited. A ridge of high mountains divides them, and the country is for the most part barren and jungly. The Irrawaddy is to Ava, what the Ganges is to Bengal, the high road of population and commerce; and both the ancient be the Nan-kiang, or Great Fish river of the Chinese. The name of the river is Hindoo, being, in fact, that of Indra's elephant (written by Mr. Ward *oira-vătă*). M. Langles, in his erudite work, *Monumens des Indes*, speaking of Indra and his elephant, says, that *Iravatti* means aqueous. Whether the river be named from the elephant, or the elephant takes its name from the watery element, appears, therefore, doubtful. There is a Hindoo tradition respecting a fabled lake called Anaudat, on the eastern bank of which, it is said, is the image of a lion's head, on the southern that of an elephant's, on the western that of a horse's, and on the northern that of a cow's; and from these four heads are poured forth four rivers. The meaning of the fable is supposed to be, that the banks of these four rivers, the sources of which were unknown, abounded respectively with lions, elephants, horses, and cows.—See *Asiat. Res.*, vol. vi. p. 233. Every one knows, that the Ganges is represented as flowing from the cow's mouth, the name given to a large stone in the bed of the river at Gangoutri. It is possible, that a similar legend may connect the Irrawaddy with the mouth of the elephant. However this may be, the cow is not held more sacred in Hindostan, than the elephant is in Birmah.

* This river, of which scarcely any thing appears to be known, is supposed to be the Lu-kiang of Yun-nan. It is the Pegu river of Buchanan, the Caypumo of older travellers; it is sometimes distinguished as the Martaban river; but its true name appears to be Thaluayn or Ta-lain,—sometimes written Sanluayn, Sa-lwen, Thaulayn It has been confounded with the Sitang, Sittong, or Zeet-taung river, which is, we suspect, the one to which the name of Pegu (or Bagoo) was first applied by the Portuguese. By some geographers, the Thaluayn is represented as falling into the Sitang; and it is not improbable, that there may be at least some communication between them.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

and the modern capitals are seated on its banks. It is navigable by the native boats as high as Quantong, on the frontiers of Yun-nan; and it presents one of the readiest means of opening a commercial intercourse with the south-west dominions of China. Westward of the Irrawaddy, and along the right bank of its western branch, the Kiayn-duem, as high as lat. 24°, the Birmans possessed, prior to the conquest of Arracan, a tract varying in breadth from ten to thirty miles, and confined by a ridge of mountains inhabited by a barbarous race called Kains, or Kiayns, who are for the most part independent of the Birmans. Further northward, the country is said to be mountainous or desert; so that, with the exception of the fertile plains of Manchewban, or Monchaboo, lying between the Kiayn-duem and the eastern or principal branch of the Irrawaddy, and extending from lat. 22° to 24°, (which district is said to be the granary of Ava,) there does not appear to be any part of their own extensive territory northward of Prome, from which the Birmans derive much advantage, except within an average distance of fifteen miles from either bank of the river. Below Prome, the frontier of Pegu, the country is in general more level and susceptible of cultivation, and, on the banks of the river, is as rich a soil as any in the world. That of the upper provinces is said to be a sandy loam on a bed of freestone or ferruginous rock: in the lower provinces, there is a larger proportion of argillaceous earth and vegetable matter.* To the south-east of Prome lies the ancient kingdom of Tonghoo, or Taungu, said to be fer-

* These particulars are derived chiefly from a tract drawn up by Col. Francklin.—See *Asiatic Journal*, vol. xx. p. 4.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

tile, but thinly inhabited.* To the south and west of Tonghoo, the country in general to the sea, including the delta of the Irrawaddy and the low lands watered by the Martaban river, — in fact, the whole of what may be termed Pegu Proper, has received from the Birmans the name of Henzawuddy.†

The periodical inundation of the valleys and maritime plains by the rising of the rivers, is a circumstance common to all this region, although they observe different periods, which indicates that their sources must be at unequal distances. The Mei-nam, or Siam river, has the highest and most regular inundations, on which account, it has been supposed to have its sources in the most distant mountains of central Tibet.‡ The more probable explanation is, that it

* Beyond Tonghoo, Col. Francklin says, to the eastward and southward, is the ancient kingdom of Sittong, now dependent on Henzawuddy. This we apprehend to be the very nucleus of Pegu.

† Henza is the Birman name of a species of wild fowl called in India the Brahminy goose, which is said to be the standard of the Birmans, as the eagle was of the Romans.

‡ This river is supposed by Malte Brun (we incline to think, erroneously) to be the Nu-kiang. It is the Yuthia of our older maps. Yuthia or Yoodra is the name of the ancient Siamese capital,—more properly See-y-thaa. Vincent Leblanc, of Marseilles, who travelled in the seventeenth century, describes "the fair and large river Mecan," on which the town of Siam stands, as springing from a famous lake, 200 miles about, called the lake of Chiamay, whence, he says, "many great and famous rivers arise, as Ava, Caypumo, *Menan*, Cosmin, and others. They overflow like the Nilus. This lake is bounded eastward by vast forests and impassable marshes and fens." He has mistaken the name of the Siam river, the Mei-nam, and given it that of the Cambodia river, the Mei-kong. Although this Traveller has hitherto been regarded as a very doubtful authority, it is remarkable that several accounts agree in stating that these two rivers communicate by a navigable branch called the Anan-myeet; and it is by no means improbable, therefore, that in the rainy season, the intervening country should

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

receives a larger body of water from its numerous tributary streams. It is highly remarkable, that this inundation, like that occasioned by the expansion of the Paraguay, is greatest in the centre of the kingdom, and much less in the neighbourhood of the sea; a fact which strongly favours the idea of its communicating at the rainy season with other waters. The kingdom of Siam may be considered as a wide valley, the central basin of this vast region, terminating in a broad and deep gulf; and there are many reasons for thinking that the basin of the Mei-nam is, of all the valleys, the least elevated above the sea level. The whole southern part, called by the Birmans Dwarawuddy, appears to be intersected by streams, and the soil is adapted to the cultivation of rice. The northern part is little known. It has been supposed to be separated from Laos by mountains, but of this we have no clear evidence; and we are strongly inclined to believe, that that unknown country includes, together with immense forests, a low and swampy tract, extending from the Mei-nam to the Mei-kong, and partially inundated by the waters of both rivers. The vague and apparently jarring accounts of different travellers, may, on this hypothesis, be partly reconciled. One of these tells us,* that in Laos, there is

be inundated, and become an immense lake, like those of Xarays and Ybyra, formed by the expansion of the Parana, the Uruguay, and Paraguay. (See MOD. TRAV., *Brazil*, vol. i. p. 85.) From the lake of Ybyra three mighty rivers might be said to issue, although their sources are far distant; and it may, perhaps, be found, that that of Chiamay communicates, not only with the Mei-nam and the Mei-kong, but even with the Thaluayn, which is what is meant by the Caypumo river. In confirmation of this opinion, it may be added, that Kœmpfer represents the Mei-nam as sending branches through the kingdoms of Cambodia and Pegu.

* M. de la Bissachère.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

no sort of river, yet, that rice is the only produce; and its rice is represented by other travellers * as the best of all these countries: leguminous crops are also cultivated in great quantities. And Lac-tho (or Lac-tchoo), which, according to M. la Bissachère, lies to the north of Laos, but which M. Malte Brun supposes to be the same country, is also described to be without rivers, yet having a moist soil, abounding in bamboos, and laid out in rice fields, but containing no towns. If it has no river, it must have lakes and canals; probably a series of lakes; and accordingly, a Portuguese traveller went from China to Laos by descending a river and crossing a lake.† Again, the received opinion is, that Laos is watered by the upper part of the river of Cambodia, which one old traveller represents as issuing from an immense lake, and another makes it to be a branch of the Mei-nam.‡ If these two rivers communicate any where by a navigable branch, as appears certain, it is not improbable that, higher up, they may unite their waters in some "periodical Caspian." The country to the north-east of Siam is stated to consist of vast forests and impassable marshes and fens. Here, probably, are the forests of Laos, which are said to abound with elephants in so great numbers, that the country derives its name from that circumstance. Many buffaloes are also reared there. The Siamese were once in the habit of repairing to Laos in caravans of waggons drawn by buffaloes, making a journey of two months.§ Such journeys could not have been made across high

* Marini and Wusthof, as cited by Malte Brun.

† Jarric. See Malte Brun, vol. iii. p. 364, from whom we have gathered most of these facts, though we have not adopted his conclusions.

‡ See note at page 6.

§ Malte Brun, vol. iii. p. 365.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

mountains. Taking all these circumstances into consideration, we infer that, to the south of Yun-nan, there is an immense tract of low level country, abounding with lakes, swamps, and morasses,* like the Houquang, or lake-country of China, or that of the *Sete Lagoas* (Seven Lakes) of Paraguay; that here the waters of the Siam and Cambodia rivers, at certain seasons at least, unite, though one or both of these streams may have a more distant source;† while, to the east of the kingdom of Siam, a range of mountains, apparently bending to the S.W., intervenes between the vast plains of Dwarawaddy and the rocky channel of the Mei-kong. Further information, however, can alone verify these conjectures.‡

Indo-China, then, consists of three grand divisions, Birmah, Siam, and Annam, besides the peninsula of Malacca, and the various independent principalities of

* Districts lying near the base of great ranges of mountains, Mr. Marsden remarks, especially within the tropical latitudes, are always found to be unhealthy. The Yun-nan mountains are of great height, "while the great Nu-kiang, said to be navigable between that province and Ava, must flow chiefly through a plain and comparatively low country."— MARSDEN'S *Marco Polo*, note 858.

† Marini places the sources of the Mei-kong in the Chinese province of Yun-nan. The Dutch envoy, Wusthof, ascended it in a boat to the north of Cambodia, and met with great cataracts. This renders it probable that its banks are rocky, and that it descends from a higher level than the Mei-nam.

‡ The strange perplexity in which we have found ourselves involved in attempting to clear up this point, is in great measure occasioned by the almost *ad libitum* application of the word Laos to different regions. "Laou or Laos," Sir Stamford Raffles says, "is the country north of Siam Proper." (FINLAYSON'S *Siam*, p. 223, *note*. If so, it includes Siammay and Yunshan. Yet, Malte Brun (on the alleged authority of Wusthof) brings it down almost as far south as Tsiompa, between Cambodia and Cochin China!

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

the mountain frontiers. The Malays form a distinct race, who are supposed to have proceeded originally from the Indian archipelago, and their language is a mixture of Coptic, Sanscrit, and Arabic. All the other Indo-Chinese nations resemble more or less the Mongolian and Chinese races in their figure, square countenance, yellow complexion, strong hair, and oblique eyes; and are evidently of the same original stock. Their languages, too, exhibit the same characteristic simplicity, poverty, and deficiency with the monosyllabic languages of Tibet and China. The three-fold division of the country corresponds to the three distinct languages which are found prevailing: the Birman, which is spoken in Ava and Arracan; the Siamese, which extends over Laos; and the Annamese, which is used in Tonking, Cochin China, and Cambodia. Pegu, however, is said to have an original dialect called the Môn, of which too little is known to determine its relation to either of the three classes. These languages are more or less mixed with Chinese and Hindoostanee, according as the nations are situated near India or China. The sacred language of Birmah is the Pali, which is believed to be the same that is vernacular in Magadha or Southern Bahar. The Birman dialect has also borrowed the Sanscrit alphabet; the character in common use, however, is a round Nagari, consisting of curves following the analogies of the square Pali, and written from left to right like the languages of Europe. Their legal code is one of the commentaries on the Institutes of Menu.* In these and other respects,

* It is a singular fact, that the first version of Sir William Jones's translation of the Institutes of Hindoo law, was made into the

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

the Birmans discover their affinity to the Hindoo family, while the Siamese, the Annamese, and the Peguans bear a more strongly-marked resemblance to the Chinese.*

The political divisions of the Indo-Chinese countries have undergone the perpetual changes consequent on ill-defined boundaries, and the constant struggles of the various rival states to obtain the supremacy. The most powerful monarchy at one time, as it is probably the most ancient, was that of Siam, which extended from the Gulf of Martaban to Cambodia, and southward to Malacca.† Afterwards, Pegu appears to have been the most flourishing state. Its tyrant is stated to have demolished the capital of Siam, made himself master of the white elephant, and sacked the town of Martaban. Between Siam and Pegu, there seems to have been carried on a constant struggle for supremacy from time immemorial. At one time, Pegu is said to have been conquered by a king of Tonghoo; but the white elephant, the Buddhic Apis, was wrested from Pegu by a king of Arracan.‡ When the Portuguese, early in the six-

Birman language by an Armenian, for the use of the Birman emperor, in 1795.

* The Indo-Chinese languages are reckoned to be fourteen in number. Seven of these are polysyllabic, viz. 1. Malayu; 2. Jawa; 3. Bugis; 4. Bima; 5. Batta; 6. Ta-gola; 7. Pali, the learned language. The other seven are monosyllabic, viz. 1. Rak-heng (Arracanese); 2. Barma (Birman); 3. Mon (Peguan); 4. Thay (Siamese); 5. Khohmin (Cambodian); 6. Lâw (Laos); 7. Anam.

† "The king of Siam," says Tavernier, "is one of the richest monarchs in the East, and styles himself king of heaven and earth, though he be tributary to the kings of China."—*Travels*, part ii. b. iii. c. 18. Tavernier travelled in 1660—70.

‡ The Lord of the White Elephant is the distinctive title of the rightful possessor of an incarnate symbol of Buddha, who is thereby exalted above his equals; it therefore is not an empty sound, but

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

teenth century, had succeeded in making themselves masters of Malacca, they found the regions between the Indian Sea and Anam divided among the four powerful states which have since been familiarly known under the names of Arracan, Ava, Pegu, and Siam.* Their historians tell us, that the Birmans, though previously subject to the king of Pegu, had recently become masters of Ava; and these Birmans the Portuguese assisted in their subsequent wars against the Peguans. Ava is, properly speaking, the name only of a town, and does not appear to have been ever recognised by the natives as the name of their country. Besides which, as the name is generally applied, it seems difficult to understand how

confers an actual supremacy. In like manner, the kings of Egypt looked upon Apis as a symbol of Osiris. This envied distinction has for ages been as much an object of ambition in the Buddhic states, as universal empire has been among the nations of Christendom. The sovereign of Tonghoo once possessed the title with all its prerogatives; it was wrested from him by the king of Siam; from whom, after torrents of blood had been shed, it passed to the Talien monarchy. "You hear for what reasons," says Leblanc, "the king of Pegu waged war with Siam, that bred so much ruin and desolation—for a white elephant only; a fatal and unhappy beast that hath cost the lives of five kings, as it happened to the last king of Pegu, who had it lately taken from him by the king of Arracan." This old Traveller was not aware, apparently, of the sacred and symbolic character of the fatal beast.—*Asiat. Journal*, vol. xix. p. 652. See also PICART'S *Histoire des Religions et Mœurs des Peuples*.

* Assam, however, was, at this time, a powerful and independent monarchy. "The chiefest of the idolatrous kings of Asia," says Tavernier, "are the king of Arracan, the king of Pegu, the king of Siam, the king of Cochin China, and the king of Tonquin."—p. 163. But he afterwards devotes a chapter to the kingdom of Asem, which he describes as one of the best countries of all Asia; and he describes the gold and silver money of the kings of Asem, Tipoura, Arakan, and Pegu. In one place, he seems to make Asem border on Pegu, and he clearly includes Ava in the latter kingdom.—pp. 187, 8.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

the Portuguese could enter into alliance with the inhabitants of a country so far inland, to whom they could gain access only through Arracan or Pegu. But, in point of fact, the names of Ava and Pegu appear to have been originally applied by the Portuguese to two rivers;* one, the Irrawaddy, and the other we suspect to be the Sitang or Zeet-taung, the river of Tonghoo or Taung-oo, although the Bagoo Mioup or Pegu river is a name applied to a smaller stream, navigable only with the tide, and communicating with the Rangoon or Syriam branch of the Irrawaddy. The proper name of the Peguans, that by which they are known to the Birmans, is Taliens or Ta-lain, which seems to be the same appellation as we find given to the Caypumo or great Martaban river. Their original country would seem to be that which lies to the west of that river, and which is traversed by the Zeet-taung. Martaban appears to have been anciently a dependency of Pegu. It is not improbable, indeed, that the Talain might occupy both banks of the river, and extend themselves southward towards Malacca. The isthmus seems to have been a scene of perpetual contention between the Siamese, the Taliens, the Birmans, and the Arracanese. To whom it originally belonged, it would perhaps be impossible to ascertain; but those who commanded the mouths of the rivers which fall into the head of the Gulf of Martaban, would seem to have the best title to the proprietorship of the western coast.

* Tavernier says: "Siren is the name of the city where the king of Pegu resides, and *Ava* is the *port* of his kingdom. From Ava to Siren you go by water in great flat-bottomed barks, which is a voyage of sixty days." By Siren, Syriam is probably meant; and if so, the Traveller has simply mistaken the city for the port, and the port for the capital.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

The native name of the country improperly called Ava, Dr. Buchanan says, is My-am-ma. The Chinese know it under the name of Mien-tien, or Zo-mien. The earliest notice we have of the country, occurs in the Travels of Marco Polo, who gives an account of a memorable battle that was fought in the year 1272, in the province of Vochang or Yunshang, between the great khan and the king of Mien and Bangala in India. "The losses in this battle, which lasted from the morning till noon, were severely felt on both sides; but the Tartars were finally victorious; a result that was materially attributed to the troops of the king of Mien and Bangala not wearing armour as the Tartars did, and to their elephants, especially those of the foremost line, being equally without that kind of defence, which, by enabling them to sustain the first discharges of the enemy's arrows, would have allowed them to break his ranks, and throw him into disorder. From this period, the great khan has always chosen to employ elephants in his armies, which before that time he had not done. The consequences of this victory were, that his majesty acquired possession of the whole of the territories of the king of Bangala and Mien, and annexed them to his dominions."* By some writers, this title has been understood to imply two confederate sovereigns; but the context shews that only one personage is intended, whom we may assume to be the sovereign of Ava and Arracan. This passage is im-

* Travels of Marco Polo, by Marsden, 4to. p. 444. D'Anville and others have supposed Mien to be Pegu, which mistake the learned Editor of Marco Polo supposes to have arisen from the Peguans having conquered Ava or the Birmah country, from which, however, they were subsequently driven. Since the year 1757, he adds, Pegu has been a province dependent on the kingdom of Ava. The fact is, that Pegu has been loosely applied to the whole country.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

portant, as it proves a close connexion, either by origin or conquest, between the people of the two countries. The lord of Arracan long assumed the title of sovereign of Bengal; and it appears that whichever of the rival monarchs of the Buddhic world laid claim to the supremacy, assumed the prerogative of including among his titular dominions all the other states.*

The word Myamma is evidently the same as Mien, but conformed to the Birman pronunciation.† It is not so easy to decide on the etymology of the latter word.

* The following passage from Vincent Leblanc's Travels (1660) throws no small light on the facts referred to:—"Verma (Birmah) hath formerly belonged unto the kingdom of Bengale: the people are very civil and given to trade. Catigan (Chittagong) belongs to the kingdom of Bengale, which reaches over 400 leagues of land; and the lordship of Aracan, a kingdom between Bengale and Pegu, stronger by sea than by land, and wages often war with Pegu, and some years since, they say, hath swallowed up Pegu, but ruined by neighbours, and therefore the king is called king of Aracan, Tiparat (Tipperah) Chacomas (Cachar?) Bengale, and Pegu."—*Asiat. Journal*, vol. xix. p. 650.

† The pronunciation of the Birmans is to a stranger almost inarticulate: they hardly ever pronounce the letter r; and t, d, th, s, and z, are almost used indiscriminately. The same may be said of p and b. Thus, the word for water, which the Birmans universally pronounce *yoe*, is written *rae*. This indistinct pronunciation probably arises from the excessive quantity of betel which they chew. No man of rank ever speaks without his mouth being as full as possible of a mixture of betel-nut, tobacco, quick-lime, and spices. In this state, he is nearly deprived of the use of his tongue, and hence an indistinct articulation has become fashionable, even when the tongue is at liberty. A striking singularity in the language is, that every syllable is liquid in its termination, each letter having its peculiar vowel or nasal mark subjoined, and in no instance coalescing with a following letter. Were a native of Birmah or of Arracan, acquainted with the Roman letters, but not with the rules of English pronunciation, to read the words, book, boot, bull, he would, agreeably to the powers he is taught to affix to the characters of his own language, pronounce them respectively bū, or būcă, būtă, būlă; the organs of articulation being inadequate to give ut-

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

In Dalrymple's Oriental Repository, the Birmans are called *Boraghmans*. In the Birman alphabet, published at Rome in 1776, the name is written *Bomans*.* The first question to be determined is, whether the appellative is derived from the name of a country, or is merely an honourable designation denoting a warlike class. Some have supposed that Birmah or Birman is the same as Myamma or Biamma, the proper name of Ava. On the other hand, some old travellers mention a city and country to the east of Ava, under the name of Barma, Brema, or Brama, which they describe as a separate kingdom from Ava, and whose king sometimes carried on wars against the king of Ava.† While again, Leblanc dis-

terance to the final consonants according to the abrupt mode by which we are accustomed to terminate these words. "A native of Arracan," says Dr. Hamilton, "of natural strong parts and acute apprehension, with whom more than common pains have been taken for some months past, to correct this defect, can scarcely now, with the most determined caution, articulate a word or syllable in Hindustani that has a consonant for a final, which frequently occasions very unpleasant and some ridiculous equivocations; and such is the force of habit, even in making the most simple and easy things difficult, that, obvious as *the first elementary sound* appears to our comprehension, in an attempt that was made to teach him the Nagari character, of which it is the inherent vowel, a number of days elapsed before he could be brought to pronounce it, or even to form any idea of it, and then but a very imperfect one."—*Asiat. Res.* vol. v. p. 148. Nor is this peculiarity confined to the Birmans. The Chinese is formed on the same principle, as well as some of the African dialects, and, possibly, those of Tibet.

* Malte Brun, vol. iii. p. 340.

† "Southward, Pegu confines upon Martaban and Siam; eastward, upon *Brama*, Camboya, and Cochin China; northward, upon Ava, Tazatay, and Arracan; westward, upon the gulf of Bengal....The kingdom of Pegu is cut through in many places by that great river, called by the High Indians Amoucherat, and by the natives, the river of Pegu, or Cayputno, or Martaban, that

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

tinctly mentions a kingdom of Verma or Berma, adjoining to Chittagong, and consequently to the west of Ava, and which, he says, formerly belonged to Bengal. Without laying too much stress on either the veracity or accuracy of this Traveller, it seems to us reasonable to believe that there was a country known under that name. His description of its position would lead us to conclude, that this could be no other than that part of Birmah westward of Chittagong and to the north of Arracan, which is watered by the Kiayn-duem and its confluents.* On the other hand, the national name of the Arracanese is said to be *Marumma*, supposed to be a corruption of *Maha-vurma*, (the great Vurma)†—Vurma being, we are told, an appellation peculiar to tribes of Khetri or

runs by several branches through the level, and fertilizes the soil. This river rises at the lake Chiamay, passes through *Brema* or *Brama*, washing in with her waves refined gold. It runs through the kingdom of Prom, where are the famous towns of Milintay, Calamba, and Amirandou; those territories join Ava; then to Boldia, called by the Higher Indians Siami; then to Berma or Verma, whereof the capital is Carpa, and butts upon Tazatay, and the kingdoms of Pandior (Pandua or Assam), and Muantay (Cassay or Meckley). The king of Pegu subjected the kingdom of Berma two years after he conquered Siam."—LEBLANC'S *Travels*, cited in *Asiat. Journal*, vol. xix. p. 652. In this account, the Irrawaddy and the Caypumo are confounded or mistaken for branches of the same river; but in other respects it is accurate, and the countries of Brema and Verma are clearly distinguished.

* "Bengal is bounded eastward by the province of Edaspa (Tiperah?) that joins to the kingdom of Aracan; one of its limits southward is Castigan or Catigan (Chatigam or Chittagong) at the third mouth of the Ganges, over against the kingdom of Verma or Berma, where are the mines of chrysolites, sardonyx, and topazes." —*Asiat. Journal*, vol. xix. p. 650. "There are mines of gold, silver, rubies, and sapphires now open in a mountain called Wooboolootan near the river Ken-duem." — SYMES, vol. iii. p. 374.

† Hamilton's Gazetteer, *art.* Arracan.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

Cshatriya extraction, that is, of the warrior caste. In Bengal, the Arracanese are known under the name of Mughs or Maugas, that is, subjects of the Great Mogo, a title of high ecclesiastical dignity assumed by their rajahs. The Birmans, according to Colonel Francklin, derive their origin and name from Brumwha, who is evidently the same as Maha-vurma; and by other authorities it is stated, that they profess to have come originally from Arracan. If the Mogo and the Maha-vurma be not the same personage, we should still incline to believe that the Marumma, Vermas, or Birmans, and the natives of Arracan, belong to the same race. The proper country of the Mughs is the *Mogo Calinga*, extending along the coast from the eastern branch of the Ganges to Cape Negrais, whence they appear to have spread into Cassay, called in Sanscrit the country of the Muggaloo, which has been corrupted into Meckley, having for its capital the flourishing city of Munnipore.* Both the Arracanese

* Malte Brun, vol. iii. p. 345. "The inhabitants call themselves Moytai." This is doubtless the Moantay of Vincent Leblanc, which he describes as a great kingdom, lying to the north of Canarene, in which we recognise the country of the Kains or Kiayns. Canarene is described as "a fair town, rich and flourishing as any in India, the capital of a kingdom of the same name, confining eastward on the country of Tazatay, south on Carpa (Verma), and northward on Moantay. The town is seated betwixt two great rivers, Jiame and Pegu; it is in circuit about four leagues, magnificently built. In customs and conditions, the people differ much from those of Pegu, for they never go barefoot. The king of Canarene is potent and wealthy in mines of gold and silver: he hath also one of emerald, and some mines of turkesses (turquoises)." The Kien-duem, or Kiayn-duem, the great western branch of the Irrawaddy, derives its name from the Kiayn tribe, the name signifying the Fountain of the Kiayns. It arrives in the Birman country from the N.W., and separates it from the conquered province of Cassay. The river Jiame is perhaps a mistake for Miamma. Cassay is now called by the Birmans Ka-thee. Meckley

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

and the Birmans are evidently of Hindoo extraction, and are only different tribes of the same stock,—a branch, it is supposed, of the Palli or Palays, whose overthrow and dispersion form one of the most remarkable events in the history of India. Their sacred language, the Pali, their religious faith, the title of Mogo, and every other circumstance, connect them with the country of Magadha or Southern Bahar. The Pali, which is in fact a dialect of the Sanscrit, is the vernacular dialect of Magadha or Southern Bahar. Magadha was the kingdom of the great Mogo Rajah. Now Gayah, the birth-place of Buddha, is in this province, fifty-five miles S. of Patna, and is still a place of pilgrimage for his votaries, though among the resident inhabitants remarkably few Buddhists are to be found, the Brahminical being the prevailing religion. That the history of the Birmans, mythological and civil, is the same as that of the Hindoos, Colonel Francklin says, he has abundant proof in various tracts which he has collected, particularly the *Maha Bogdha-whein*, or the great history of their duties, and the *Maha Raj-whien*, the great history of their kings. A remarkable passage is cited by Sir William Jones, from the Institutes of Menu, respecting the origin of the Chinese and other eastern nations. "Many families," it is said, "of the military class (*Cshatriya*), having gradually abandoned the ordinances of the Veda and the company of Brah-

forms the northern part.—See HAMILTON'S *Gazetteer*, art. Keenduem. The Chinese call Arracan, Yee-kien, or Yo-kien; and the Kains, Canaranes, and Rak-kaings (the same word as Ya-kaings), are evidently the same people. Kiayn-duem, therefore, is literally the Arracan river, although it must not be confounded with the Mayoon or Myoo river, which flows through Arracan into the Bay of Bengal.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

mans, lived in a state of degradation, as the *Pahlavas*, the *Chinas*," &c. These emigrant tribes are stated to have rambled in different bodies to the *north-east* of Bengal, and to have established separate principalities in those countries.* It is a striking coincidence, that, in the war of the Mahabharat, the tribe of warriors is represented as having been annihilated. Vishnu, under the form of Ramaswara, is fabled to have gained this triumph, on whichoccasion he founded a new order of Brahmans. From this sanguinary revolution dates the overthrow of Buddhism in India, Buddha being thenceforth reduced to a subordinate deity in the Hindoo pantheon. In the Mughs, the Birmans, and the Panduans of Assam, it seems in the highest degree probable, that we have the remains of the annihilated *Cshatriya* class, the widely-dispersed *Palli* of the fallen empires of Pandu and Magadha.

Thus much, then, appears tolerably certain; that the Birmans were originally, as their name indicates, a tribe of warriors† of the Pali nation; that they fixed themselves in the first instance on the banks of the Kien-duem, thence extending themselves eastward over the country of Mien to the confines of China, and descending the great Irrawaddy, possessed

* Sir W. Jones's Works, 4to. vol. i. p. 96, &c.

† In confirmation of this etymology, it may be mentioned, that the Birmans are a nation of soldiers, every man in the empire being liable to be called on for his military service. It is somewhat singular that the word German, which has in like manner become the geographical designation of a collection of separate states, has a similar meaning: in the Teutonic, according to D'Anville, it signifies a war-man or warrior. And the emperor of Germany was formerly, like the Lord of the White Elephant, the military head of a body of crowned feudatories. The Birmanic empire, too, is likely to undergo a dismemberment not very dissimilar to that which has transformed the circles of Germany into distinct kingdoms.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

themselves of the eastern coast as far as Cape Negrais, while to the south-east they found powerful rivals in the Taliens, who possessed the line of the Irrawaddy, south of Prome. By this means they came in contact with the Portuguese settlements in Chittagong, and with their assistance carried on their wars against the Peguans. The main point of contention has always been, the sovereignity of this important river, the grand channel of commerce and enterprise; and to the foundation of Ragoon, and the total overthrow of the rival capital of Pegu, may be traced all the greatness of the Birman empire.* The romantic

* The statements of the Portuguese writers, that the Peguans were at one time subject to the Birmans, before Alom-praw raised the standard of independence, appear to us deficient in probability; and there is a passage in Leblanc's Travels, which goes some way towards both proving and explaining their mistakes. It would seem that, not the Birmans, but an individual of the name of Bramaa, was the conqueror of Pegu. "Some years before we arrived, there was in the country a king of the ancient royal race, who had many deputies in the country of Brema towards the lake Chiamay; among the rest, one in the kingdom of Tangu (Tonghoo), that rebelled against him, defeated and slew him, and made himself king of Pegu. They called him the *Brama of Tangu*, a great and potent tyrant, who, by force of arms, joined many kingdoms to his empire, as Prome, Melintay, Calcam, Bacam, Mirandu, Ava, Martaban, and others. He was afterwards put to death by a Peguan lord, called Xemin or Zatan," (probably the king of Sitang is meant,) "who made himself king, but was defeated and slain by another, called Xemindoo, who likewise being made king, was not long after defeated and put to death by Chaumigren, of near alliance to Bramaa, who became one of the most powerful kings that hath reigned in Pegu: he brought totally under the empire of Siam, with twelve other great kingdoms. The king that reigned in Pegu in our time, called Brama, was, as I think, the son of this Chaumigren, afterwards hard enough dealt with by the kings of Tangu, Aracan, and Syan." (*Asiat. Journal*, vol. xix. p. 653.) Here, it will be seen, the king of Birmah or Ava is not mentioned. The Brama of Tangu may have been a Birman, although he is represented as coming from Brama near Siam. But the word

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

story of the circumstances which led to these events, will form the proper

HISTORY OF BIRMAH.

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, both the English and the Dutch had obtained settlements in various parts of the Birman dominions; but owing to the misconduct of the latter, all Europeans were subsequently banished from Ava. It was many years after this expulsion, that the English were reinstated in their factories at Ava and Syriam, and they also took possession of the Island of Negrais. The superiority of the Birmans over the Peguans was maintained until 1740, when a general revolt took place, and a civil war ensued, which was prosecuted with savage ferocity. In the course of this contest, the British factory at Syriam was destroyed, and all commerce was for several years suspended. At length the Peguans, having procured supplies of European fire-arms, with the assistance of some renegade Dutch and native Portuguese, gained several victories over the Birmans, during the years 1750 and 1751; and in the year 1752, the capital of Ava, after a short siege, surrendered. Dweepdee, the Birman king, was made prisoner, with all his family, except two sons, who found means to escape to Siam, where they met with a friendly reception. Beinga Della, king of Pegu, returned in triumph with his captives to his capital, leaving his brother Apporaza to govern the subjugated country, and to exact an oath of allegiance from all Birmans that should be

seems to be used as denoting a chief, or as a proper name. At all events, it was not the Birman king of Ava that acquired the supremacy over the Taliens of Pegu.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

suffered to retain their former possessions. All wore the appearance of submission; the inhabitants and principal landholders took the prescribed oath, and Birmah seemed prostrate at the feet of her successful rival; when an obscure individual, indignant at the humiliation of his country, effected a complete revolution, and laid the foundation of the present extended empire. Alom-praw, or Luong-praw, a Birman of low extraction, known by the humble name of Aumdzea, or the huntsman, had been continued by the conqueror in the chiefship of Monchaboo, at that time an inconsiderable village about twelve miles from the river, west of Keoum-meoum. Endowed with a spirit of enterprise and talent equal to the greatest undertakings, he harboured a fervent desire to rescue his country from her humiliating yoke; and it was not long before the arrogance of the Peguan monarch afforded him a favourable moment for making the attempt. On his return to his capital, the conqueror, in terms of insolent triumph, announced, that Birmah, subdued by his prowess, was annexed as a conquered province to his dominions, and that the city of Pegu was in future to be the general metropolis. Alom-praw had, at this period, about a hundred devoted followers, on whose courage and fidelity he could rely, while there were not more than fifty Pegu soldiers in Monchaboo, who treated the natives with the most galling contempt. Availing himself of some particular act of indignity, Alom-praw so skilfully worked on the minds of his followers, that, attacking the Peguans with irresistible violence, they put them all to the sword. After this act of inexpiable rebellion, Alom-praw, still dissembling his intention, wrote in terms of contrition to Apporaza, representing the affair as an act of unpremeditated

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

violence, arising out of mutual irritation. The vice-roy, being called to the metropolis by urgent business, and underrating the character of his adversary, contented himself with ordering the reduction of Monchaboo, and the imprisonment of Alom-praw until his return. A small force was accordingly despatched to bring him in bonds to Ava; but, on approaching Monchaboo, to their astonishment they found it strongly stockaded, and were received with threats of defiance. Alom-praw was not a person to suffer them to recover from their surprise. At day-break, he sallied forth at the head of his little band, and so furiously assaulted the Peguans, who did not exceed a thousand, as utterly to rout them, and he pursued them for two miles. After this exploit, he invited all the neighbouring places to join his standard, and many obeyed the summons, while others thought the enterprise as yet too hazardous. When news of this disaster reached Ava, Dotachew, the nephew of Apporaza, who governed in his absence, timidly hesitated whether to march at the head of his troops, to await a reinforcement, or to retreat to Prome; and while he lingered, Alom-praw, who, through the affections of his countrymen, had faithful intelligence of all that passed, boldly resolved to advance, before he could strengthen himself by the numerous Pegu forces scattered throughout the country. The report of his approach was sufficient to embolden the Birmans to rise on their oppressors. Dotachew fled; all the Peguans who remained behind were slain; and Alom-praw, spared the necessity of advancing in person, sent his second son, Shembuan, to take possession of the capital.

At this time, both the English and the French had re-established their factories at Syriam, and had, of

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

course, their separate interests. The French favoured the Peguans; the English took the part of the Birmans; both parties, however, contented themselves with rendering the petty aid of clandestine supplies. Early in 1754, the Pegu monarch, now awakened to a sense of the danger, despatched Apporaza from Syriam, with a numerous fleet of war-boats up the Irrawaddy, to reconquer the revolted provinces. The season at which this expedition was undertaken, was unfavourable. In the dry months of January, February, March, and April, the river subsides so as to be scarcely navigable from shoals and sand-banks, and the northerly wind, which invariably prevails at this season, retards all boats of burthen. After sustaining a series of harassing attacks from the Birmans on the shores of the river, as they proceeded, Apporaza succeeded in advancing as high as the city of Ava; but Ava was of sufficient strength to stand a protracted siege, and Shembuan resolved to defend it to the last extremity. Alom-praw had, in the meanwhile, collected in the immediate vicinity, at Keoummeoum, a powerful fleet and an army of ten thousand men; and Apporaza, preferring the risk of a battle to the tedious and doubtful operations of a siege, left Ava in his rear, and advanced to attack the Birman forces. The contest was obstinate and bloody. At length, a report, skilfully spread, that Shembuan was advancing on their rear from the fort of Ava, threw the Peguan forces into total disorder and rout; numbers were slaughtered in the retreat, and Shembuan, issuing from the fort of Ava, completed their destruction. This signal victory secured the emancipation of Ava. Enraged at these repeated defeats and reverses, the Peguans had recourse to vindictive measures, which, in the end, proved fatal to themselves. Their

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

aged and unoffending prisoner, the dethroned king of the Birmans, was accused of conspiring against the Peguan government, and on this pretence was put to death. The principal Birmans in the districts yet in the hands of the Peguans, being supposed to be implicated, were every where indiscriminately slaughtered. These atrocious and bloody scenes effected no other purpose than to drive to desperation the numerous Birmans in the towns and districts of Prome, Keounzeik, Loonzay, and Denoobew. Furious at the murder of their monarch and the slaughter of their countrymen, they simultaneously rose upon their oppressors, and having exterminated the several garrisons, united themselves to the now distinguished leader of their countrymen.

At this period, the eldest son of the deposed and murdered monarch, hearing of the success of Alompraw, returned to Monchaboo, with a set of brave and faithful followers, from an eastern province of Siam; but, on his venturing imprudently to assume the distinctions of royalty, Alom-praw so clearly developed his views on the throne, that the prince thought it prudent to consult his safety by flight, and again sought an asylum among the Siamese. In the autumn of 1754, Beinga Della, king of Pegu, having made the greatest efforts to raise fresh levies, advanced and laid siege to Prome. This city was fortified by a wall and fosse as well as a strong stockade, and for forty days it was vigorously defended against every assault, until Alom-praw, having collected the choicest of his troops, proceeded down the river with a formidable fleet of war-boats. A fierce and bloody encounter took place between the two armies; but at length, the Birmans obtained a decisive victory, and the vanquished Peguans sought safety by flight. The mere terror spread by the

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

conqueror's approach, sufficed to clear the whole river to the sea, and to extend his authority over the delta formed by the mighty waters of the Irrawaddy. Here, before his return to Monchaboo, on the ruins of a large and populous town, called in the Pali, Singoun-terra, Alom-praw laid the foundation of the flourishing sea-port of Rangoon,* which has since become so well known, not only to our merchants but our troops. The revered temple of Shoe Dagon (the Golden Dagon), a noble edifice, stands three miles from the banks of the river.

The contests maintained by the expiring efforts of the Peguans, were continued for a considerable time on the Persaim (or Bassien), Syriam, and Martaban rivers and estuaries; but Alom-praw finally defeated all his opponents. Exasperated at the instances of duplicity and weakness displayed in turn by the principal persons of the English and French factories, who were desirous of assisting only the strongest, and thereby betrayed both parties, he took a sanguinary revenge by putting to death the principal Europeans on both sides, and destroying the factories. Pursuing his victorious career, he at length invested Pegu, the capital of the rival and constant enemy of Birmah. Having erected numerous stockades so as to form a circumvallation round the whole city, in January 1757, he sat down to wait the slow but certain effects of hunger and distress. A gallant struggle, the dying efforts of a once powerful nation, protracted the siege, and various fruitless efforts were made to escape the last point of humiliation. At length, the king of Pegu, whose imbecility seems to have equalled his ill fortune, surrendered himself

* Rangoon, or Dzangoon, Col. Symes says, signifies victory.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

with his family to the discretion of the conqueror, and Pegu was given up to indiscriminate plunder.

Turning now again southward, Alom-praw proceeded to reduce the large district of Martaban, and the important line of sea-coast from that river downwards through the peninsula of Tenasserim to Mergui, together with the independent state of Tavoy. In a subsequent expedition, occasioned by the revolt of the southern provinces, he wrested Mergui and Tenasserim from the Siamese; and provoked at the assistance they had lent to the insurgents, he resolved to annex the kingdom of Siam to his dominions. He had proceeded, in May 1760, to lay siege to its capital, and so decided and energetic were his measures, that he would probably have succeeded in this bold enterprise, when death arrested his career, and thus saved the Siamese from total ruin. Foreseeing that his end was approaching, he raised the siege, hoping to reach once more his own dominions; but within two days' march of Martaban, he expired, in the fiftieth year of his age. The short space of seven years not only sufficed to achieve these splendid conquests, but Alom-praw proved the strength of his capacity not less by the extent, variety, and clearness of his civil and judicial enactments. He laid deep and strong the foundations of the Birman power; they have never hitherto been shaken, and his posterity still wield his sceptre. It is unfortunate that the impression of ill-faith on the part of the European factories long survived his reign, and has apparently sunk very deep in the minds of the Birman government. The incidents of the wars of Alom-praw are not, therefore, without their interest even at this distant period, as they tend to throw considerable light on the present obstinate contest.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

The eldest son of Alom-praw succeeded to the vacant throne, but not without a recurrence of those scenes of sanguinary civil contest which are continually exhibited in countries scourged by eastern despotism. Nam-dojee-praw found a rival in his younger brother Shem-buan, who, being with the army at the decease of his father, not only endeavoured to gain their support, but went so far as to issue a proclamation declaratory of his having been nominated heir to the crown by the deceased monarch. Finding himself, however, unable to maintain his claims, he sued for a reconcilia-tion, which his brother had the magnanimity to grant. He had to encounter a more dangerous competitor in Meinla Rajah, a general high in favour with the late king, who not only seized Tonghoo, the strongest for-tress in the Ava country, but succeeded in possessing himself of Old Ava, the ancient capital. His prompti-tude and rapidity had nearly gained the crown, and made him master of the person and fortunes of Nam-dojee-praw, who remained at Monchaboo, the favourite residence and capital of Alom-praw, engaged in raising fresh levies to oppose the rebels, but whose chief reli-ance rested upon the junction of his raw soldiers with the veteran army led by his father against Siam. The season befriended him, for the volume of waters poured down from the Tibetian mountains on the melting of the snows, so increases the rapidity and force of the stream, that, in the months of June, July, and August, the navigation of the Irrawaddy would be impracticable, were it not counteracted by the strength of the north-west monsoon. Assisted by this wind, and cautiously keeping within the eddies of the banks, the Birman boats use their sails, and make a more expeditious passage at this season than at any other time of the year. The distance of the present capital

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

of Birmah from Rangoon, by the river, is about 500 miles; but although so far from the sea, its noble breadth of stream, aided by the inundation, placed the royal forces far beyond the reach of any annoyance from the walls of Ava, which they passed to effect a junction with the king; and this union of strength finally enabled him, after an obstinate defence, the result of despair, to reduce the city, and exterminate the rebels.

Two other unsucessful revolts occupied the attention of Namdojee-praw during his short reign of three years; but the only event requiring notice was the tacit agreement of both parties to bury in oblivion the circumstances connected with the expulsion of the English from their factory at Negrais, and the grant of as much ground as they could occupy at Persaim. Namdojee-praw had the character of a severe and rigorous judge, punishing slight immoralities with the severities due only to atrocious crimes. A second conviction even of drunkenness, incurred the inevitable penalty of death; and any offences against the tenets of religion or its ministers, were inflexibly punished. He left one child, an infant; but the throne was immediately seized by Shembuan, his brother, whom he had formerly so generously pardoned. The reign of this monarch, which lasted for twelve years, was a scene of active and successful warfare, and proved him to be possessed of distinguished abilities. Pursuing the plans of his parent, Alompraw, against the Siamese, Shembuan, in the beginning of the year 1766, advanced against the capital, which soon surrendered, and the king became his prisoner. Shembuan appointed a governor over the country, and exacted an oath of allegiance; but so inveterate is their national hatred of the Birmans,

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

that nothing short of extermination could long retain the kingdom in subjection to the foreign yoke. The hate of the Siamese soon found vent, and Pe-ya-tai, the son of a rich China man by a native woman, governor of the province of Muong-tai, led a revolt which, after a violent struggle, rescued Siam from its invaders. The capture and plunder of Yuthia, the ancient capital, by the Birmans, together with the disastrous events which followed, had induced many of the inhabitants to abandon the place. Pe-ya-tai, collecting the scattered remains of the dispirited population, was soon in a condition to found a new city. Bankok, also seated on the great river of Siam, the Meinam, was at this time a place of little importance, noted chiefly for the excellence of its fruits, which were sent in great abundance to Yuthia; but its site offered several advantages over that of Yuthia, and Bankok has ever since been the capital of the kingdom.

In the year 1744, Shembuan sent a formidable force against the Munnipoora Rajah and the Cassay Shaan, carrying his arms into the recesses of the distant hill districts of the Brahmapootra. The rajah of Caçhar consented to yield as tribute to the Birman monarch, besides a sum of money, a virgin of the royal blood, and a tree with the roots bound in their native clay; thereby indicating that both person and property were at the disposal of his sovereign pleasure. In the south of his dominions, Shembuan repressed a most formidable and dangerous rebellion of the Peguans, of which he availed himself to bring to a mock trial and execute as a common criminal, Beinga Della, the aged monarch of Pegu, who had lingered for twenty years in captivity. It deserves notice, however, how precisely the fate of this unhappy sovereign corre-

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

sponded to the act of barbarity inflicted by Beinga Della himself on his vassal, the captive king of Birmah.

The most singular and important event of the reign of Shembuan, was a powerful invasion of the Birman dominions by a numerous army of Chinese. Scarcely was the Siamese war concluded, when the Chinese emperor, conceiving, probably, that the long and bloody wars between the Birmans and the Peguans must have enfeebled the neighbouring state, prepared an expedition which had for its object to annex the fine and fertile countries of the Irrawaddy to his immense dominions. It was in 1767, that the Birman monarch was informed that a Chinese army of 50,000 men, supported by a powerful body of Tâtar cavalry, had already advanced from the western frontiers of Yun-nan, and crossed the mountains that skirt the Chinese and Birman empires. Shembuan had prepared two armies: one, consisting of 10,000 infantry and 2,000 cavalry, under Amiou-mee, engaged the attention of the Chinese, and harassed their progress; while a much greater force, commanded by Tenjia-boo, a general of high rank, was directed to get in the rear of the enemy by a circuitous march over the mountains that lay further southwards. The Chinese approached by unremitting marches. Leaving the province of Bamoo to the west, they penetrated by Gouptong, between which and Quantong there is a *jee*, or mart, where the Birmans and Chinese meet to barter the commodities of their respective countries. The jee was taken by the Chinese and plundered; and near Peenjee, the advanced forces of Amiou-mee sustained an action, in which, from their inferiority of numbers, they were worsted and obliged to fall back. This inconsiderable success led to the total destruction of the Chinese

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

army, which became so elated as to conceive that no obstacle existed to impede their advance to the capital. Forsaking the high road, probably for the convenience of forage, they had advanced by Chenghio as far as the town of Chiboo, when the army of Tenjia-boo appeared in their rear, while the governor of Quantong, having joined Amiou-mee, took up a strong position in their front. Thus enclosed on all sides, the Chinese army was soon compelled to make a desperate effort at breaking through their straitened bounds. Supposing Amiou-mee to be the weaker party, they attacked his division with the fury of despair; but, after a very long and bloody conflict, the arrival of the fresh and numerous forces of Tenjia-boo decided their fate. Of 50,000 Chinese, not a man returned to their country. The Birmans have always practised an exterminating policy towards their enemies, and have followed up any revolts or resistance to their arms by such unrelenting cruelties as have tended to strike terror into every adjoining state. About 2,500 only were preserved from the sword, and conducted in fetters to the capital, where a quarter was assigned for their residence. These captives, in conformity to the custom of the empire, were encouraged to marry Birman wives, and to consider themselves as natives. This remarkable peculiarity in the Birman customs, which reminds us of the Lacedemonian liberality, or of the genius of Roman institutes, speaks highly for the followers of the Shaster, marking the superior character of their general polity, which grants to every sect the practice of its religious rites. Tolerant alike of Christian, Mussulman, or Jew, they admit to equal privileges the votaries of Confucius, or of the Arabian prophet; and their children, if born of a Birman woman, are entitled to the same protection from the

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

state, as if descended from a long line of Birman ancestry.

Shembuan, having now established his throne on the strong foundations of terror and respect, resolved upon an act of policy, under the disguise of a religious solemnity, adapted to confirm the impression of his power. The sacred temple of Dagon near Rangoon, where Guadma Buddha had been adored from time immemorial, had, in the year 1769, been greatly damaged by an earthquake, and the sacred *tee*, or umbrella of open iron work, which crowned the spire, had been thrown down and irreparably damaged. In Birmah, a pagoda is not deemed sanctified until it receives the tee, and its erection is an act of high solemnity. Shembuan, having caused a magnificent tee to be constructed at Ava, announced his intention of descending the Irrawaddy, and assisting in person at its erection. Attended by a numerous train of Birman nobles, and a body guard of 50,000 men, he left his capital, and arrived at Rangoon in October 1775. At the different stages of his progress, he inflicted the most relentless punishments upon the different Peguans of rank who had been concerned in the recent rebellion; and it was upon this occasion that, after a mock trial, he wantonly put to death the aged monarch whom he had led captive in his train. These cruelties and this act of devotion to Buddha were the last deeds of Shembuan. On his return to the capital, he was seized with a mortal illness, and expired in the spring of the year 1776.

Momein, the infant son of Namdojee-praw, was now growing towards manhood. He had been secluded in the *kioum* or monastery of Lo-ga-ther-poo, at a short distance from the fort of Ava, and he was yet destined to inhabit its privacy. Chenguza, the

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

son of Shembuan, ascended, as rightful heir, the throne which his father had wrested from the infancy of Momien. Arrived himself at maturity, the state of the Birman empire so flourishing, its foundations laid so firm, and potently supported by the faithful adherents and able counsellors of his father, every circumstance augured a prosperous and brilliant reign; but the short and ignominious career of Chenguza was marked by shameless debauchery, and by acts of the greatest cruelty and barbarity. Stimulated by jealousy, he caused his younger brother, Chilenza, to be put to death; his uncle Terroug-mee also fell a victim to his suspicions, and his other relatives were either detained in confinement or harassed by a vigilant surveillance. His first marriage being unfruitful, he espoused as his second wife, a daughter of one of the attawoons or chief counsellors of his court. His intemperance causing mutual alienation, he, in a groundless fit of jealousy, had the unfortunate victim dragged in open day from the palace, enclosed in a scarlet sack, and drowned in the Irrawaddy in the view of thousands of spectators, among whom were her agonised father and many of her relations. His insane caprice induced him to reverse most of the late king's plans, by recalling his armies, and disgracing Maha-see-soo-ra, the general in highest reputation; and not content with having repealed the edicts against drunkenness, he constantly exhibited himself in a state of inebriety. By his contemptuous treatment of the sacerdotal class, with which the sovereign of these regions is closely and intimately associated, he drew on himself the hatred of that powerful order, and thereby enabled his subjects to overthrow his throne, and free themselves from his yoke. Despotic as are the monarchs of

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

Birmah, they are nevertheless circumscribed in their apparently unlimited despotism, by the *rhahaäns* or priests. This was made apparent by the part they were prevailed upon to take at the present emergency. Protected by the sanctity of the chosen retreat and the sacred functions for which he was professedly destined, Momien had been screened by the rhahaans from the fears and jealousy of Shembuan and his yet more dangerous son and successor Chenguza; and they now silently prepared to avail themselves of their ascendancy over their pupil, whose slender capacity made him a willing instrument. Minderajee-praw, the younger brother of Shembuan, a man of eminent parts and equal ambition, soon laid the plans which effected their purpose. One proof of the capricious, unsettled mind of Chenguza, was his irregularity in issuing from and returning to his royal fort and palace; a station in all Asiatic kingdoms, even in Turkey and Persia, of the highest importance, as usually containing the treasures and exhibiting the state of the sovereign, and almost conferring the possession of the royal power on its occupier. Chenguza had gone to Keoptaloun, about thirty miles below Ava, to celebrate a high festival, when Momien, attired in the ensigns of royalty, and supplied with a royal retinue by the address of his advisers and followers, presented himself as Chenguza, at midnight, at the golden gate, and demanded admission. It was opened, but, suspicions being excited, an effort was made to close it, which would have been fatal to the whole enterprise; the conspirators, however, rushed in, and after a smart conflict, gained possession of the palace. Early next day, Momien was proclaimed sovereign of Birmah, and Chenguza was declared an outlaw. Forces were despatched by sea and land to Keoptaloun, to seize his person; but Chen-

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

guza, informed of his danger, had shut himself up in the strong fortress of Chagaing. There he was invested by the forces of the new king, and soon finding that the weakest of all beings is a despised and dethroned tyrant, he determined on fleeing to the Cassay country, and soliciting protection from the Munnipoora Rajah. During the six years of his reign, he had observed the most pacific conduct towards his vassals and neighbours; he might, therefore, have received the shelter which he courted. From this resolve he was, however, dissuaded by the voice of his mother, the widow of Shembuan-praw, who urged him to prefer death in his own golden courts, rather than to depend on the precarious bounty of a vassal. Chenguza, although so long immersed in vice and profligacy, yielded to this counsel, and thus gave in his last act one proof of a lofty and magnanimous spirit. Having privately prepared a small boat, in disguise, and with only two adherents, he crossed the Irrawaddy to the principal ghaut, or landing-place, at the foot of the walls of the palace, where he was speedily challenged by the sentinels. No longer seeking to conceal himself, he called out in a loud voice, that he was *Chenguza-nandoh-yeng-praw* — Chenguza, lawful lord of the palace. A conduct so unexpected and lofty surprised the guards who, overawed and restrained by the Birman law, which expressly forbids the shedding of the blood of one of the royal family, suffered him to proceed, and the crowd that had quickly collected, respectfully opened for his passage. He had penetrated to the gate of the outer court of the palace; and so rapid are the changes in human affairs, especially in eastern climes, that he might again have reached the summit of power, when he was confronted by the

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

attawoon whose daughter he had so inhumanly drowned in the Irrawaddy. Chenguza, on perceiving him, exclaimed: "Traitor, I am come to take possession of my right, and to wreak vengeance on my enemies!" Scarcely had he uttered the words, ere his exasperated foe, seizing a sabre from one of the attendants, laid him breathless at his feet. For shedding royal blood, however, the ill-fated attawoon was basely delivered over to the executioner. Momien, a mere tool in the hands of those who had made use of him to achieve the tyrant's downfall, was, within the space of six days, himself precipitated from the throne by his ambitious uncle Minderajee-praw; and the new king, to prevent any future danger from his pretensions, caused him to perish in the waters of the Irrawaddy.

In 1782, Minderajee-praw commenced his reign; and although he was indebted for his elevation to deeds of blood, he governed with clemency and justice, recalling and replacing Maha-see-soo-ra, and the officers and counsellors of his brother and father. Secured against foreign enemies, and exempt throughout his reign from family disturbances, he was nearly deprived of his throne and life by a conspiracy, over the object and motives of which there hangs a considerable degree of obscurity. The leader in this treasonable attempt was Magoung, a low-born man; and it is said to have been concerted without the privacy of any person of consequence. Magoung is represented as having been "remarkable only for the regularity of his actions and a gloomy cast of thought;" yet, he must have possessed a certain consideration, as he had influence enough to form a confederacy of a hundred persons as visionary and desperate as himself. These

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

persons bound themselves, under an oath of secrecy and fidelity to each other, to take away the life of the king. Whether Minderajee-praw had infringed on any privileges, or excited hatred by the outrage against Momien's sacred person,—whatever were their motives, their attempt to effect their purpose was so energetic and powerful, that, breaking through the customary guard of seven hundred men, they were on the point of succeeding: nothing preserved the king but the casualty of his having retired to the range of apartments allotted to the women. Disappointed of their prey, and surrounded by the guards, the conspirators were all put to death.

Although, as votaries of Buddha in his character of Guadma, the Birmans are exempted from the yoke of Hindoo castes, and pay no regard to the innumerable deities of the Hindoo mythology, yet, there is a close connexion between the two forms of superstition. Brahmins admit Buddha into their pantheon as an incarnation of Vishnu the preserver; while the Birmans, although esteeming the Brahmins inferior in sanctity to their own *rhahaäns*, yet hold them in high respect, and these personages have for ages been accustomed to migrate from Cassay and Arracan to Ava. The habits of the Brahmins, and their intercourse with society, must raise them in general knowledge far above the Birman priesthood, who are an order of monks residing in convents, and holding it to be an abuse to perform any of the common functions of life. The Brahmins, skilfully availing themselves of the early predilection of Minderajee-praw for the science of judicial astrology, and flattering him with favourable prognostics, soon introduced themselves into high influence at court, obtained the grant of a college

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

and lands for their support, and engrossed the whole regulation of the national calendar, assuming the prerogative of pronouncing upon the propitious or adverse moment of any undertaking from unerring prognostics. The Brahmins have thus obtained a permanent footing in Birmah. A certain number of them form a train of fatidical augurs, who, like the Magi of Iran, or the Druids of Britain, compose a sacred band, the guardians of the throne.* Prompted by these new counsellors, Minderajee-praw removed his seat of government from Awa Kaung, or Old Ava, and founded a new metropolis. His choice was judicious. About four miles from Ava, towards the north-east, is a deep and extensive lake called Tounzemaun, formed by the influx of the river during the monsoon, through a narrow channel, which afterwards expands, and forms a sheet of water seven or eight miles in length, and about a mile and a half broad. On a peninsula formed by this lake on the one side, and the river Irrawaddy on the other, stands Amara-pura (Ummerapoora), or the immortal city, the flourishing metropolis of the empire. The situation is dry and salubrious, and Amara-pura soon became one of the best built and most flourishing cities of the East.

The chief event of the reign of Minderajee-praw was the successful invasion of Arracan, a state of the greatest natural strength, which appears to have been judiciously planned and executed. Ar-

* Colonel Symes calls them the king's "private chaplains." On the day of audience, "four Brahmins, dressed in white caps and gowns, chanted the usual prayer at the foot of the throne; a rahhaan then advanced into the vacant space before the king, and recited in musical cadence the name of each person who was to be introduced, and of whose present he entreated his majesty's acceptance."—Symes, vol. iii. p. 169.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

racan, or Yee-kien, stretches from the river Naff (or Naaf), which separates it from the district of Chittagong, as far southward as Cape Negrais. The great range of western mountains, called Anou-pectou-miou, nearly encircles it. From Bassïen or Cape Negrais, its southern frontier can be invaded only by water. On the north, it is accessible from the Chittagong frontier only by the sea-beach, which is continually intersected by channels from the sea; and the mountainous passes of the Anou-pectou-miou Ghauts are so difficult, that an enterprising people might, with a small force, defend them against any numbers. Although the great river on which the city of Arracan stands, expands into a noble sheet of water, yet, its entrance is well protected by sands and numerous islands. A strong fleet of boats, however, descending the Irrawaddy, entered the waters of Arracan by the creeks and channels of the Bassien river, and a naval action took place about two miles from the fort, which terminated in favour of the Birmans. The approach of a powerful detachment under the Prince of Prome, who had penetrated the mountain defiles, completed the victory. Maha Sumda, the Rajah of Arracan, terrified at the bold and warlike character of his foes, sought safety in flight, but was overtaken, and conveyed with all his family to Amara-pura, where he died in the first year of his captivity. The town and fort of Arracan fell after a faint resistance. This was followed by the surrender of the islands of Cheduba, Ramree, and the Broken isles. Many of the Mughs,* or natives of Arracan, preferring flight to servitude,

* A corruption of *Mogo*, a term of high sanctity, properly belonging only to the sacerdotal order and the rajah.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

took refuge in the Dumbuck hills on the borders of the Chittagong district, and amid the forlorn wastes and jungles skirting the frontiers; where, having formed themselves into independent tribes of robbers, they have carried on unceasing hostilities against the Birmans. Some settled in the districts of Dacca and Chittagong, under the protection of the British flag; while others, rather than abandon their country, submitted to the conqueror.

The total reduction of Arracan occupied but a few months. The booty is said to have been considerable; but on nothing was so high a value placed as on the original sitting statue of Guadma Buddha, made of brass highly burnished.* This, together with five other gigantic images, of the same metal, representing *racshyas*, or Hindoo demons, the guardians of the sanctuary, and an enormous brass cannon, thirty feet in length, was conveyed by water to the capital with much pomp and superstitious parade. It was upon this occasion, we are told, that the Birman monarch, having gained possession of so important a trophy, and succeeded to the prerogatives of the great Mogo, assumed the imperial title of *Boa*, and the still prouder designation of Lord of the White Elephant, the highest distinction in the Buddhic world. This important acquisition did not, however, satisfy the conqueror's ambition. The rival state of Siam was

* "The figure is about ten feet high, in the customary sitting posture, with the legs crossed and inverted, the left hand resting on the lap, and the right pendant. This image is believed to be the original resemblance of the *reshee* (saint), taken from life, and is so highly venerated, that pilgrims have for centuries been accustomed to come from the remotest countries where the supremacy of Guadma is acknowledged, to pay their devotions at the feet of his brazen representative."—Symes, vol. i. p. 253.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

recovering its former vigour after enjoying a long respite from hostilities; but the Birman emperor now resolved to push his conquests further southward along the western coast of the peninsula. After an unsuccessful effort made by an expedition from Rangoon to gain possession of the island of Junkseylon, Minderajee left his capital at the head of 30,000 men, and a train of twenty field-pieces, and taking the route of Tonghoo, reached Martaban in the spring of 1786. Scarcely had he entered the Siamese territory, when he was met by the king of Siam with a powerful army. A furious engagement ensued, in which the Birmans were completely routed, their useless cannon were taken, and the emperor himself narrowly escaped being made prisoner. Hostilities were carried on between the two nations without any decisive result for several ensuing years, till at length, in the year 1793, overtures for peace were made by the Siamese, and a treaty was entered into, by which they consented to cede to the Birmans the western maritime towns as far south as Mergui, including the important province of Tenasserim and the port of Tavoy; acquisitions of great importance, considered either in a political or a commercial light. The province of Bamoo and the fort of Quantong had also been wrested from the Chinese, and the boundary extended to the thickly-wooded heights which separate the Chinese province of Yun-nan from Ava; and the Birman emperor thus found himself invested with the undisputed sovereignty of a territory equal in geographical extent to the whole of France.

Such was the state of things when, in 1794, an event occurred, which had nearly embroiled the Birmans in fresh hostilities with a more powerful foe than they had yet encountered. The trade of Arracan had

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

long suffered from the attacks of piratical banditti, and even fleets laden with the royal customs had been attacked by these bold freebooters, chiefly refugees from Arracan, who scrupled not to make predatory incursions by land also. Having accomplished their object, they, as the Birmans alleged, transported their spoil across the river Naaf, the boundary of the Chittagong district, and under the protection of the British flag, lived in safety and at ease, until impelled by want to renew their depredations. His Birman majesty, on becoming acquainted with these facts, disdaining to institute any inquiry or to prefer any complaints, ordered a body of 5,000 troops to march into the district, with positive commands to apprehend and bring back the culprits. The British Government, surprised at this aggression, despatched a strong detachment with artillery forthwith to Chittagong, to expel the invaders. Seeree Nunda Kiozo, the Birman general, appears to have conducted himself with singular moderation and discretion. After his army had crossed the river and encamped on the western bank, he dictated a letter to the British magistrate of Chittagong, stating that the only object of this inroad was the caption of the delinquents, and disclaiming any design of hostilities against the British: at the same time, he declared his resolution not to quit the Company's territory till they were given up; and having fortified his camp with a stockade, he seemed determined to abide by this resolution. On the approach, however, of Major-general Erskine, Seeree Nunda Kiozo sent a flag of truce, proposing terms of accommodation on the same basis; and he afterwards, with a manly confidence in the British character, personally waited on General Erskine, who appears to have acted with equal firmness and prudence. It being represented

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

to them, that no proposals could be listened to while they remained on English ground, the Birmans were induced to recross the river, having received a promise that the matter of complaint should instantly be investigated. The refugees were already in custody; and the result was, that the three principal delinquents were surrendered to the Birman chief, who, having attained the object of his expedition, retired with his captives from the British frontier.

The governor-general (Sir John Shore) now deemed it expedient to endeavour to cultivate a better understanding and a closer connexion with this bold and formidable neighbour. With this view, an embassy to the Birman court was determined upon; and in 1795, Colonel Symes was despatched from Calcutta in the character of agent plenipotentiary, with a suite of more than seventy persons. To this gentleman's account of his successful mission, and the historical memoir prefixed to it, we are indebted for the materials of the preceding sketch, and for the greater part of the information which we possess respecting the geography, manners, and political condition of the country. The trade between Rangoon and both Calcutta and Madras had, for some time, been on the increase, more particularly on account of teak timber, the produce of Ava and Pegu,* which is invaluable for the purpose of ship-building. But from this period, it has been more especially an object with the

* In proof of the importance of the Pegu trade, Colonel Symes states, that "a durable vessel of burthen cannot be built in the river of Bengal, except by the aid of teak plank, which is only to be procured from Pegu. Madras is supplied from Rangoon with timber for all the common purposes of domestic use; and even Bombay, although the coast of Malabar is its principal storehouse, finds it worth while annually to import a large quantity of planks from Pegu."—Symes, vol. iii. pp. 266, 70.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

Indian government to secure an amicable intercourse, for the purposes of commerce, with the Birman power.

In the year 1799 and 1800, fresh hostilities broke out between the Birmans and the Siamese, in which the latter were the aggressors; and they obtained at first considerable advantages, routing the Birmese forces opposed to them. But so great were the exertions and resources of Minderajee-praw, that the Siamese were soon compelled to fall back; and the result appears to have been, a recognition of the old boundary, and a truce of longer duration than usual. The feudal system of conscription which prevails in the Birman empire, enables the sovereign readily to bring into the field a force of powerful and menacing amount. The court of Amarapura can, without much difficulty, command, by means of its great feudatories, the viceroys of Pagahm, Prome, Tonghoo, and other chiefs, a body of from 60 to 80,000 men on any one point, and by means of its noble rivers can direct this vast force with sufficient precision to the prescribed spot. So well arranged and combined are their military movements, that, in the invasion of Arracan by the late monarch in 1783, a simultaneous operation by three divisions of troops, and a flotilla of war-boats, took place so accurately, that they all appeared at nearly the same moment before Arracan; and that country has ever since furnished its contingent levy of troops for the armies of Birmah. But during the Siamese war of 1799 and 1800, a large mass of Arracanese, disgusted or terrified by the new regulations of conscription, emigrated in a body into the British province of Chittagong; and after various disputes and altercations with the Birmans, they at length were allowed peaceably to settle on districts apportioned out for them in the British

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

territories. The truce with Siam lasted until 1810, when another furious contest took place, which, after much bloodshed, terminated as usual to the advantage of the Birmans, by extending and consolidating all their conquests on the western coast from Mergui to the island of Junkseylon.

No interruption of commercial intercourse between British India and the Birmans took place during the remainder of this reign; but a deep-rooted jealousy of the British appears to have taken possession of the mind of the emperor. In 1818, the Marquess of Hastings had certain information of his having joined the formidable Mahratta confederacy, which had for its object to subvert our Indian empire. By the well-conceived device of transmitting the intercepted documents to the Birman emperor as forgeries, accompanied with an account of the triumphant ascendancy of our arms in all quarters, the governor-general succeeded in warding off at that time a tremendous inroad on our eastern frontier. The Birman emperor wisely availed himself of the hint, and the intercourse between the two countries went on as before. In June 1819, Minderajee-praw terminated his long and prosperous career, after a reign of thirty-seven years. The state paper issued on the occasion announced, according to the Chinese formula, that the immortal king had gone up to amuse himself in the celestial regions. He was succeeded without opposition by his grandson, the *Engy Tekien*, or prince royal. The new emperor was proclaimed in June 1819; and on the 2d of November following, being his birth-day, he was solemnly crowned at Ava. He must immediately after his accession have entered on the reduction of the province of Cassay, as in January 1820, he celebrated his victory in presence of the American Baptist mission-

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

aries. By this conquest, the frontiers of Birmah were pushed forward, on the north and west, to the eastern boundary of Bengal, to Dinapore and its districts, the Garrows, the Sylhet Hills, and the mountain ridges of Cachar. Nor was it long before this close contact with our Indian empire became the occasion of fresh disagreements. In 1822, a large body of the persecuted Assamese migrated into the British territory, and, as before, the fugitives were followed thither by a considerable Birman force sent to reclaim them. The assurance that these refugees were strictly precluded from exercising any act of hostility against their conquerors, seems, however, to have satisfied the Birman commander, and no act of hostility followed. Indeed, the attention of the sovereign of Birmah appears at this time to have been wholly occupied with the reduction of Siam, the favourite object of his predecessors in the empire. In order to accomplish the final overthrow of this kingdom, an effort was made to obtain the concurrence of the king of Cochin China. Whatever may have been the plans of attack, the relative frontiers remained unaltered in 1824, when the eventful war broke out between the British government and the Birman empire. Many petty acts of ill will had betokened the jealousy and alienation of the Birmans, when, in September 1823, a body of their troops, amounting to 500, took forcible possession of the island of Shapuree, in pursuance of an order from the capital, read publicly at Arracan. They were instantly expelled by force, and an explanation demanded. The next act of open hostility, was the advance of 2000 Birman troops, with a view to restore the rightful rajah of Cachar, who had been deposed and had sought refuge in the Birman dominions. Ghumbur Sing, the usurper, was supported

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

by the British; and by this revolution, that state had been for some months under the British protection. These acts, therefore, of hostility against Cachar, together with the attempted occupation of Shapuree, were the ostensible grounds of the war.

It has been usual, in former wars with the Asiatic states, to experience a violence of onset, impetuous in the extreme, but which has soon exhausted itself, so that it has required only the perseverance and combination requisite to surmount the first attack, and the storm has subsided of itself. Not so in the recent contest with the Birmans. On the northern or Sylhet frontier, in the district of Chittagong, in the southern maritime districts of Rangoon, Dalla, and Mergui, every where large bodies of troops met the British detachments, fought with a bravery the most determined, and evidenced a decided superiority over most of the native armies. The island of Shapuree, in the river Naaf, the boundary of Chittagong, was soon retaken, and was never again made the scene of action. In Cachar, the ground was contested with vigour and skill, large bodies of Birmans and Assamese presenting themselves at every point. The latter forces, dragged into the war to support the power of their oppressor, usually fled at the first encounter; but the former, entrenching themselves in their peculiarly effective stockades, maintained a persevering resistance.*

After many severe conflicts, they were expelled from Cachar; but invading the Chittagong province,

* Col. Bowen, giving an account of an attack made upon the stockade of Doodpattee, in Feb. 1824, says: "They fought with a bravery and obstinacy which I had never experienced in any troops." The Birmans amounted to 2000. After a most severe action, which lasted from ten in the morning till the evening, the British were obliged to retire to Juttrapore with a heavy loss.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

they advanced as far as Ramoo, and surrounding a detachment consisting of five companies of the 23d native infantry, three companies of the 20th, some provincials, the Mugh levy and artillery, they completely overwhelmed and routed the whole force. The highest alarm was excited in Calcutta by this victory, in consequence of the unprotected state of this important frontier; but the enemy, as if undecided in their object of warfare, remained stationary at Ramoo. The brunt of the contest, however, was destined to fall upon the southern maritime provinces, and a large armament from the Bengal and Madras presidencies anchored off Rangoon, on May 16, 1824. This flourishing place, which had grown to consequence and prosperity by the extent and importance of its commercial relations, was abandoned and partially destroyed on the approach of the British, and was completely desolated by the series of obstinate conflicts carried on in its neighbourhood. In the month of May, the island of Cheduba and the point of Negrais were taken possession of by the British troops, but in neither case without a severe contest. Stockades of great strength were established by the Burmans along the river; and although repeatedly driven from their stations, they immediately occupied some post in the rear, retreating with equal order and judgement, until the gradual rising of the Irrawaddy, laying the whole country under water, suspended active proceedings from June to October. The district of Dalla, eventually subjected by the British, was also spiritedly contested. The pagoda at Keykloo, fourteen miles above Rangoon on the Irrawaddy, when attacked by Lieutenant-Colonel Smith, on the 5th of October, was so judiciously and skilfully defended, that our troops were repulsed with

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

considerable loss, and were obliged to retreat, as the despatch expresses it, dispirited and ungovernable. On returning to the attack, on the 9th of October, with a reinforcement of European troops, the town was found evacuated and in flames. After a series of actions, more or less obstinate, Martaban, Tavoy, and Tenasserim were at length reduced by the British arms, and the whole Birman possessions eastward of Pegu fell before the superiority of European tactics. In Mergui, there were found 143 pieces of ordnance; in Martaban, 116 pieces. Not in one point only, but throughout the border of this extensive dominion, the Birmans had provided formidable means of defence. But it was in the central provinces, and on Ava's mighty river, the Irrawaddy, that the most effective preparations were made for the important struggle.

In the beginning of December, the Maha Bundoola descended the river, from Prome, with an army of 60,000 men. A series of attacks and combats now commenced, which manifested a spirit and courage the most determined on the part of the Birmans, and a knowledge and skill in the Maha Bundoola, which extorted the praise of Sir A. Campbell. Their attacks upon the British line continued for six days. The left wing of their army, when defeated with great loss, merely retreated on their right, and the struggle was renewed, till this division also was routed, with the loss of 5000 men, and their ordnance and *chattahs* (honorary standards). Still undismayed, they rallied the remnant of this great army, and entrenched themselves within five miles of their original position, at the village of Corkain, to the number of about 20 or 25,000 men,—"with a judgement," says the despatch of the brigadier-general, "which would do credit to the best-instructed engineers of the most

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

civilised and warlike nations." In the mean time, our shipping was attacked by a large naval armament of war-boats, and was in no small danger from the fire-rafts of the enemy. Accident, however, had fortunately attached to the British fleet a steam-vessel, equipped in India by a private individual, which rendered the most efficient assistance, rushing amid the Birman war-boats with an impetus which nothing could withstand. Astonished and alarmed at the wheels, the noise, and the column of smoke which issued from this mysterious assailant, these brave but inexperienced foes suffered a total defeat, the larger portion of their boats being overset and run down. Driven from the water, and combated both by flood and by land with arms hitherto unknown in this part of the East, the remains of the grand army under their brave leader, retreated towards the shores of Pegu, there to prepare for future conflicts.

In January 1825, the Birman generalissimo was found to have stationed himself at Denoobew, a large town on the great river, about fifty miles above Rangoon; so small a space in the heart of the country had the British acquired by the series of brilliant but dearly-bought victories they had gained. Here, the Birman general prepared to sustain an attack, having combined the remaining resources of the Pegu vice-royalty.

About the middle of February, General Cotton captured the stockade of Panlung, principally by means of the rockets and mortars; but at Denoobew, he sustained a serious repulse, and was obliged to retire with the loss of many of his officers and men. In April, General Campbell, who had ascended the Irrawaddy towards Prome without encountering any resistance, was recalled to the attack on Denoobew,

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

which was regularly assaulted with the mortars and rockets. Here, the brave Maha Bundoola ended his military career, being killed by a rocket while going his rounds, and his dismayed followers retired from the place without much further resistance. The quantity of ordnance and stores captured was very considerable. On the 24th of this month, the flotilla and army advanced to Prome, which city was evacuated by the enemy, after an attempt had been made to destroy it by conflagration. One quarter was laid in ashes, and much grain consumed. Above 100 pieces of ordnance were captured here. The despatch states, that the surrounding hills were for the most part fortified to their very summits, presenting a position of a very formidable appearance, and, in reality, so strong, that 10,000 regular troops could have defended it against any attack from ten times that force. While these important movements were taking place, a series of brilliant and sharply-contested actions put the British forces in possession of the kingdom of Arracan. From Cachar and Assam, also, the Birmans were completely expelled.

Thus terminated, in the beginning of May 1825, the second campaign of this bloody and devastating war. Prome, the ancient frontier town of Pegu, is 120 miles from Rangoon, but the distance still from Amara-pura, the capital, is about 250 miles. Taught by lamentable experience the great inferiority of their weapons and tactics to European practice, the Birman government seems now to have resorted to the frightful expedient of firing every town and village, and laying waste the lands in the track of their retreat. The present aspect of Birmah, in fact, is that of a proud and threatening ruin. Her resources exhausted beyond what half a century will be sufficient to restore;

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

her population diminished to a frightful extent; stripped of Arracan, of the great delta of the Irrawaddy, of the maritime peninsular provinces; on the north and west, driven from Assam, from Cachar, and Cassay; a formidable enemy advanced a third of the way to her capital, and possessed of the strong places of her conquered and discontented province, the once flourishing kingdom of Pegu; still, this powerful state maintains a posture of defiance, assembles fresh levies, and seems resolved on trying the fate of arms in another campaign. Whether we reflect upon the pertinacity and bravery of the constant attacks made on our positions in the vicinity of Rangoon, for at least the space of twelve months; the repetition of the contest after every repulse; the simultaneous struggle in the maritime peninsula, the province of Arracan, and the mountains of Cachar and Assam; the various repulses which at times they inflicted on our troops; and the combined arrangements requisite to sustain so great a chain of warfare upon the scale that every where was exhibited, we must admit the energy and power of the Birman empire to have surpassed that of any Asiatic state of modern times.

"Lord Amherst and his advisers certainly," remarks a writer in the Quarterly Review, "made a false estimate of the power and resources of the Birmans, when they so hastily determined on the invasion of their country. They believed, perhaps, that the military establishment was the same now as thirty years ago; they could not have anticipated that one city alone, that of Prome, would be found to contain more than one hundred pieces of ordnance, and to have been capable, had not the Birmese leader been killed or deserted by his men, of resisting ten times the force that was brought against it. But whatever was the belief as

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

to the actual state of their fortified towns, and the extent of their regular forces, Lord Amherst might fairly consider that neither the one nor the other could long resist his well-disciplined sepoys, led on by the gallantry of British officers. This, however, is not a war against the regular army of Birmah; it appears pretty certain, that the Bengal government either did not know, or left out of their calculation, that the whole Birman population, capable of bearing arms, would at once be brought against the invading army; that all the lands in the empire are held on a tenure resembling that of the feud; that a levy of 100,000 men could, at the shortest notice, be brought down to any specified point on the frontier, by means of the numerous navigable rivers which intersect the country; and that, in addition to these levies, might be brought into operation, along the whole course of the Irrawaddy, from 500 to 1000 war-boats, carrying each from forty to eighty rowers, with a piece of ordnance, a nine or ten-pounder, in the prow, and having on board, besides the rowers, twenty or thirty men armed with muskets and pikes; the towns on the banks of the rivers being compelled to furnish men for these boats. We had very soon proofs of the efficacy of these war-boats, when we had taken Rangoon. Several hundred of them were brought down to arrest our advance up the river, which, with the aid of immense fire-rafts, completely succeeded, for the first year of the campaign, in stopping our progress..,. One thing seems also to have escaped the governor-general, that, though sure to conquer the enemy, the British troops were by no means so sure of conquering the elements; that the Birmans had only to retreat to their strong holds in the mountains, and lay waste their towns and villages, which they could rebuild in

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

a month, drive the cattle from the plains, and leave disease and famine to do the rest, which, with the assistance of swamps, jungles, forests, and the rainy season, they would speedily and surely accomplish. The Birmans did not, however, act thus; they met their foes bravely and resolutely, disputed every foot of territory, and checked effectually the progress of the invading army, which in twelve months was unable to push forward twelve miles. It is greatly to be lamented, that, previously to the present hostilities, the commander of the British forces had not been instructed to try what negotiation might effect, instead of rushing into a war, which, splendid as may be the achievements, and to whatever results they may lead, can confer no advantage on either party, and has inflicted a deplorable loss on both."

POPULATION, &c.

THE population of the Birman empire, it will be seen from the preceding historical sketch, consists of various distinct nations or tribes, differing widely in dialect, physiognomy, and customs. Among these may be enumerated, 1. The proper Birmans of the Irrawaddy or Myamma; 2. The Talain, or Peguans; 3. The Siamese of the conquered provinces; 4. The Kiayn of the western mountains; 5. The Arracanese of the coast; 6. The Karayn, a tribe of cultivators; 7. The Cassayers, or Kathee people. Besides these, there are several tribes inhabiting the mountains or frontiers, of whom little is known, foreigners of various nations, and mixed castes.* Undefined and

* In the sixth volume of the Asiatic Researches, a list is given of one hundred and one nations with which the Birmans are ac-

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

changing as are the boundaries of the empire, it seems impossible to ascertain, with any tolerable

quainted, obtained from an intelligent native. Many of these names, however, refer only to cities or towns, others to classes of persons, as *Sō-ge*, hermits; and a great number are of unknown reference. Those which can be made out are as follow:—

1. Myamma. The Birmans.
2. Ta-lain. The Peguans.
3. Yun. The inhabitants of Sayammay or Chiamay (Upper Siam); the province is called Yun-shan.
4. Yoo-da-ya. The Siamese of the Mei-nam, corrupted into Yoodras, from Yu-thai, the capital.
5. Sham or Shan. The Siamese subject to Birmah.
6. Layn-sayn. The inhabitants of Lower Laos.
7. 8. Gium and Khiun. Rude tribes in the Sham country.
9. Dhanu. A rude tribe inhabiting the banks of the Martaban river.
10. Karayn. An agricultural class, Peguans, who, as cultivators of the soil, are exempted from the Birman conscription laws. No. 7, 8, and 9, are also supposed to be Karayn.
11. La-wa. A numerous tribe, inhabiting the forests east of the Martaban river.
12. Ku-lă. Europeans, or Occidentals.
13. Pădeik-kărā. A western nation.
14. Dă-way. Inhabitants of Tavoy.
15. Ta-nayn-tha-re. Tenasserim.
16. Ka-du. A tribe between Martaban and Siam.
17. Kiayn. Inhabiting the mountains separating Ava from Arracan.
18. Ain-jiay. Said to live between Cassay and the Kiayn-duayn.
19. Ka-thee. Cassay, or Meckley.
20. Myvan. Inhabiting the hills between Arracan and Chittagong, called by the Bengalees, Mowong.
21. Thœk. Inhabiting the east bank of the Naaf river and the upper part of the Kurnafoolee or Chatu river, which rises in Cachar, and falls into the Chittagong river.
22. Kien-zout. Said to live near Cassay.
23. Tă-rout. The Chinese.
24. Tă-rœk. The Tartars governing China.
25. Layn-thœk. An independent people bordering on China—probably Lac-tho.
26, 27. Pă-lé and Pă-laung. Inhabitants of the mountains north-east of Ava, who pickle the tea-leaves.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

precision, either the extent of surface or the amount of the population. Malte Brun estimates the empire at about 1,050 geographical miles in length and 600 in breadth, and it may probably contain, he thinks, 194,000 square miles. Colonel Symes rated the population, in 1795, at seventeen millions, while Captain Cox sets it down at no more than eight, and Colonel Francklin doubts whether it exceeds four. That of the capital is estimated at 25,000 houses, or 175,000 souls. In the valuable Essay on the Birman Empire, by the last-mentioned writer, are given some important data, which throw considerable light on the present question.

28. Kă-kiayn. A wild people on the Chinese frontier.
29. Poun-na. The Brahmins.
30. Pat-ta. The Malays of Acheen.
31. The-ho. Ceylon.
32. La-waik. The capital of Cambodia.
33. Zanda. The capital of Laos is said to be Zandapure.
34. A-myayn. A Birman city, remarkable for the resemblance of its name to that of the country, Mien.

Dr. Buchanan says, that he always heard Great Britain mentioned at Amarapura under the name of Pyee-gye, the great kingdom. The following Birman words are given as often occurring in composition:—

Bura, Praw, Bhra. } Lord. Applied also to Temples. It seems to answer to Baal.
Do. A forest.
Kiaung, Kioup. } A small river.
Kioum. A monastery.
Mayn. A prince.
Mioup. A river.
Myeet. A great river.
Myoo. A city or township.
O-wa. A port.
Pyee. A kingdom.
Rua, Yooa. } A village.
Taung. A hill.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

Minderajee-praw, desirous of information on the subject, is said to have ordered that every city, town, and village in his dominions, including the conquered countries, should send one soldier to the Birman army. When they were mustered at Amarapura, there appeared to be 8000 men. Now, their towns and villages, in general, are little more than a straggling line of bamboo huts along the banks of the Irrawaddy, or a double row lining a road of communication, and the whole of these 8000 towns do not average more than 150 or 200 houses each. Taking the largest statement, or 200, it will make the number of houses in the Birman dominions amount to 1,600,000, and reckoning seven persons to a house, will give a population of 11,200,000 souls;—a very scanty population for so extended a territory, and not above one half are in a state of firm allegiance. It is stated, moreover, that the proportion of women to men is as ten to six, and in some cases, four to one. This enormous disproportion is accounted for by their incessant wars; for, on the strictest inquiry, Colonel Francklin says, he pretty well ascertained that the births of females do not exceed those of males. Reckoning 6,000,000, then, for the effective population, this will give only 1,500,000 males; and making from these the usual deductions for all persons under fifteen and above fifty years of age, it may be assumed that there are not more than 375,000 men capable of bearing arms, were even the country to rise *en masse*. His Birman majesty has no standing land force, except a few undisciplined native Christians and renegadoes of all descriptions, who act as artillery, a small body of Cassay cavalry, not exceeding a hundred, and perhaps about two thousand ill-armed infantry. His armies are composed of levies,

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

raised, on the spur of the occasion, by the *tee-khiens* (princes), *chobwas* (tributary chiefs), and great lords, who hold their lands by military tenure, and are liable to be assessed according to the emergency of their sovereign. In Birmah, every man is liable to be called upon for his military services, and war is deemed the most honourable profession. When an army is to be raised, a mandate issues from the golden palace to all *maywoons* (viceroys) and *mious-jees* (heads of districts), requiring a certain number of men to be at a general rendezvous on a particular day. As soon as the imperial mandate is issued, Colonel Francklin says, " the *jugghiredaur* (or governor) intrigues and employs all his art and interest to get the number reduced; hence, various delays and obstructions to the public service. When his quota is finally fixed, he proceeds to his *jugghire*, and gives the like orders to the *mewdhagees* (zemindars), but exceeding the proportion established by the court, that he may pocket the commutation for the difference. The *mewdhagees* strive to abate their respective proportions, and impose on the inhabitants from the same corrupt motives; and the inhabitants, in like manner, strive to avoid part of the imposed burthen; so that the whole country is thrown into commotion, business is neglected, and many of the poorer class flee to the jungles, or totally abandon their country, in order to avoid these impositions, of which there is no end..... They travel by land in squads to the place of general rendezvous, at their own expense, or are transported in boats, put in requisition by his majesty's officers. Every thing wanted for his majesty's service is impressed or put in a state of requisition, without the smallest indemnification. Captain Cox saw strings of these miserable recruits, boys under age and decrepit

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

old men, marching from Arracan to Amarapoorah, in particular at Pegaan, as he was coming down the river: they had been six weeks marching so far. Another oppressive part of the Birman policy is, that men for the defence of the eastern frontier, are drafted from the west, those for the defence of the southern, from the north, and *vice versâ*, in order to secure their fidelity."*

The levy is calculated according to the population of the province or district, estimated from the number of registered houses that it contains. Should the number of any allotted district fall short, they must be commuted for by fines. Commonly, every two, three, or four houses are to furnish among them one recruit, or to pay 300 *tecals* in money (about 40*l.* or 45*l.*) The recruit is obliged to furnish himself with a short spear, sword, and target: he is supplied by Government with a musket, for which, however, he pays ten tecals, and is accountable for it at the end of the war. He has an allowance of grain, but no pay, and subsists chiefly by marauding. The families of these conscripts are carefully retained in the district, as hostages for the good conduct of their relations; and any misconduct on his part, or desertion, invariably proves the destruction of all his family, who are put into a straw hut and burnt alive: many dreadful examples of this kind have recently occurred. This national regulation binds all classes to their standards under every emergency, and serves in some degree to account for the obstinacy of their resistance. The cavalry, who compose the king's guards, are provided with a spear about seven or eight feet long, which they manage with great dexterity. All the

* Asiat. Journal, vol. xix. p. 8.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

troopers are Cassayers, who are much better horsemen than the Birmans. Although the Birmans are very fond of their muskets, the fire-arms are almost useless, and certainly, in their present imperfect state, are much less formidable than their national weapons, the sabre and spear. But the most respectable part of the Birman force is their war-boats (*tee-lees*). Every town is obliged to furnish a certain proportion of men and one or more boats, according to its population, and 500 of these vessels can in a short time be equipped. They are constructed of the trunk of the teak-tree. The largest are from 80 to 100 feet long, but the breadth seldom exceeds eight feet. They carry from fifty to sixty rowers, who use short oars that work on a spindle. The prow is solid, and has a flat surface, on which is mounted a piece of ordnance, a six, nine, or even twelve-pounder, secured by strong lashings on each side. Each rower has a sword and lance; and besides the boatmen, there are usually thirty soldiers on board, armed with muskets. Thus prepared, they sail in fleets, and draw up in line, presenting their prows to the enemy. Their attack is extremely impetuous; they advance with great rapidity, singing a war song, and generally endeavour to grapple when the contest becomes very severe. The rowers are practised to impel the vessel with the stern foremost, by which means the artillery still bears on their enemies. The largest of the war-boats do not draw more than three feet of water. When any person of rank is on board, there is a moving canopy, but gilded boats are allowed only to maywoons, whoongees (ministers of state), or the princes. These war-boats, Colonel Francklin says, are the most respectable part of the Birman force in a military point of view; but they live chiefly by rapine, and are in a

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

constant state of hostility against the rest of the people, which makes them audacious and prompt to execute any orders, however cruel or violent. It is supposed that the emperor can muster from two to three hundred of those boats.

"A Birman," adds Colonel Francklin, "is seldom any thing else than a government servant, a soldier, boatman, husbandman, or labourer. All their best artificers are foreigners." His account of their character is very unfavourable. "The Birman court appears to me," he says, "an assembly of clowns, who have neither improved their manners nor their sincerity by their transposition: they have retained their native chicane and vicious propensities, and have not acquired the blandishments of polish to veil the deformities of vice, or expansion of mind to check its domination. To their superiors, the Birmans are abjectly submissive; towards strangers, audacious and ungrateful; in power, rapacious and cruel; in war, treacherous and ferocious; in their dealings, litigious and faithless; in appetite, insatiable and avaricious; in habit, lazy; in their ideas, persons, houses, and food, obscenely filthy below any thing I had ever seen that has claims to humanity.* It must not be denied that they have brutal courage, but it tends to debase, rather than to exalt them; it is irregular, uncertain, and not to be depended upon. They are strict observers of the ceremonial parts of their religion, charitable to their priests and the poor; in the country,

* In their food, the Birmans are very uncleanly. Being fond of animal food, but restricted by their religion from killing, (venison is the only meat permitted to be sold in the markets of the empire, a privilege allowed to hunters,) they will partake of any putrid or diseased carcase. All game is eagerly sought for. Reptiles, lizards, guanas, and snakes are devoured by the lower classes.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

I am told, hospitable and not vindictive; superstitious, addicted to magic (and alchemy); cheerful, patient under sufferings, hardy, frugal to penuriousness in their diet, and affectionate parents. They would make good soldiers in the hands of a skilful general, and perhaps good subjects under a virtuous magistrate; but, unhappily, their present government seems adapted only to exalt their vices and depress their virtues."

Cunning is, among all the worshippers of Buddha, esteemed a virtue; and in their sacred books, the most abominable exemplifications of this attribute in Guadma are cited as laudable actions. The deeply-rooted opinion, that address in stealing ranks as an accomplishment next to valour, prevails all over the East,—not only in the Buddhic states, but in Hindostan and Egypt; and the Spartan legislator only borrowed his laws from institutes still existing among the mountain tribes of Asia. Thus, among the wild mountaineers to the north-east of Chittagong, whatever property a thief can convey undiscovered to his own house, cannot afterwards be claimed: if detected, he is no otherwise punished than by being exposed to the ridicule of the village, and being obliged to restore what he has taken. The idea seems to be, that the address and dexterity shewn by the successful thief, would equally qualify the warrior. So thought Lycurgus.

Mrs. Judson gives a somewhat more pleasing character of the Birmans. She describes them as "a lively, industrious, and energetic race, further advanced in civilisation than most of the Eastern nations. They are frank and candid, and destitute of that pusillanimity which distinguishes the Hindoos, and of that revengeful malignity which is a leading trait in the Malay character. Some of their men are powerful

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

logicians, and take delight in investigating new subjects. Their books are numerous, some of them written in the most flowing, beautiful style; and much ingenuity is manifested in the construction of their stories."* Dr. Buchanan asserts that they possess numerous historical works relating to the different dynasties of their princes, the most celebrated of which is the Maha-rajah-waynjee already referred to. They have also translated histories of the Chinese and Siamese, and of the kingdoms of Kathee, Koshan-pyee, Pegu, Sammay, and Layn-zayn. On medicine, the Birmans have several books: they divide diseases into ninety-six genera. Mummy is a favourite article in their pharmacopœia. They are acquainted with the use of mercury, but their remedies are mostly from the vegetable kingdom, and chiefly of the aromatic kind. Their practice is almost entirely empirical, and in spite of every mode of indirect influence and pretension, the medical class is in low estimation.†

The Birman language appears originally to have been purely monosyllabic, but it has borrowed largely from the Pali, and has formed many polysyllables from its monosyllabic roots, according to the analogies of that

* Judson's Account of the American Baptist Mission to the Birman Empire, p. 4.

† One curious custom of the Birman physicians may be mentioned here. If a young woman is dangerously ill, the doctor and her parents frequently enter into an agreement, the doctor undertaking to cure her. If she lives, the doctor takes her as his property; but if she dies, he pays her value to the parents: for, in the Birman dominions, no parent parts with his daughter, whether to be a wife or a concubine, without a valuable consideration. "I do not know," adds Dr. Buchanan, "if the doctor may sell the girl again, or must retain her in his family; but the number of fine young women which I saw in the house of a doctor at Meaday, makes me think the practice to be very common."—*Asiat. Res.*, vol. vi. p. 304.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

language. It has no inflexions, and depends almost entirely on juxta-position for the relative value of its words. Its pronouns and particles are peculiar, its idioms few and simple, its metaphors of the most obvious kind, but it is copious in terms expressive of rank and dignity; and the rank of the speaker is indicated by the peculiar phraseology which he employs. Repetitions of the same turn and expression are affected, rather than shunned; and a sententious brevity and naked simplicity of phrase are the greatest beauties of which the language admits. Too little is known of the Indo-Chinese languages to enable us to determine what resemblances may exist between them, but hitherto it has been considered as having no decided affinity to any except the Arracanese.* From the large portion of Pali which has become incorporated with it, so as to affect even its structure, it may be considered as the link between the polysyllabic and the monosyllabic languages of India and China.†

* Among the various dialects of the Birman empire, Dr. Buchanan mentions one that is spoken by a small tribe called Yo, (and by the Arracanese Ro,) who inhabit the eastern side of the Arracan mountains, governed by chiefs of their own, but tributary to the Birmans. There are four governments of this nation. This dialect is, in fact, only a slight variation of the Ruk-hing, which it approaches much nearer than the Birman. The people of Tenasserim and Tavoy also speak a peculiar dialect; but, as the majority of the words in common use among them are to be found in the Birman writings, they are reckoned to use an obsolete dialect, rather than a peculiar language.—See *Asiat. Res.*, vol. v. p. 224; vol. x. p. 236.

† "The greater part of my time, for the last six months," says Mr. Judson, "has been occupied in studying and transcribing, in alphabetical arrangement, the *Pali Abigdan*, or dictionary of the Pali language, affixing to the Pali words the interpretation in Birman, and again transferring the Birman words to a dictionary Birman and English. With the close of the year I have brought this tedious work to a close; and I find that the number of Pali

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

The Birmans write from left to right, like the Europeans. Their common books are leaves of the Palmyra palm, strung together, on which they engrave their writing with an iron style. Others are formed of thin pieces of bamboo delicately plaited and varnished, the surface being gilded, on which the characters are marked in black and shining Japan ink. The margins are often very prettily illuminated in red and green colours. In their more elegant books, they sometimes use sheets of ivory stained black, on which the characters are enamelled or gilded, the margins being also ornamented with gilding; or at other times, very fine white Palmyra leaves, on which the characters are in general of black enamel, and the ends of the leaves and margins are ornamented with flowers painted in various bright colours. As there are but few of the Birmans who do not both read and write, almost every man, Dr. Buchanan says, carries with him a *paruæk*, in which he keeps his accounts, copies songs, and transcribes any thing he deems curious. "It is in these *paruæks* that the *xares*, or

words collected amounts to about 4000. The constant occurrence of Pali terms in every Birman book has made it absolutely necessary." A considerable number of words in common use, and a very great proportion of theological terms, are of Pali origin, although the two languages are entirely distinct. Some knowledge of the learned language is therefore indispensable to the acquisition of a perfect knowledge of the Birman.—See JUDSON'S *Account*, pp. 159, 61. One great impediment to attaining a critical knowledge of the idiom of both the Birman and the Rukhing, is, that there is no regular standard of orthography, or the smallest trace of attention to grammatical inquiry among these nations. Every writing that has hitherto come under observation, not excepting even official documents, has been found full of the grossest inaccuracies. The priests are the only persons conversant with the Pali, and few even among them are celebrated for either the extent or accuracy of their knowledge.—*Asiat. Res.*, vol. v. p. 236.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

writers, in all courts and public offices, take down the proceedings and orders, from thence copying such parts as are necessary into more durable books. The *paruæk* is made of one sheet of thick and strong paper, blackened, about 8 feet long and 18 inches wide; it is folded up somewhat like a fan, each fold or page being about six inches wide, and its length the whole breadth of the sheet: hence, wherever the book is opened, whichever side is uppermost, no part of it can be rubbed but the two outer pages; and it only occupies a table one foot in width by 18 inches long. The Birmans write on the *paruæk* with a pencil of steatites. When in haste, the *sares* use many contractions, and write with wonderful quickness. I have seen them keep up with an officer dictating and not speaking very slow. But when they take pains, the characters written in the *paruæk* are remarkably neat. Indeed, this nation, like the Chinese, pique themselves very much on writing an elegant and distinct character. When that which has been written on a *paruæk* becomes no longer useful, the pages are rubbed over with charcoal, and the leaves of a species of dolichos; they are then as clean as if new, and equally fit for the pencil." *

All the boys in the empire are taught by the priests, who are dependent for their support on the contributions of the people; but no attention is given to female education, excepting in a few instances among the higher classes.† The boys are taught to read and write by means of boards blackened with charcoal and the juice of a leaf, which answers the same purpose as our slates, and the letters are formed by a species of white stone, a little similar to our slate-pencils. A lesson is

* Asiat. Res., vol. vi. p. 307.

† Judson, p. 5.

Digitized by Google

Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

written out on this board by the instructor: when the scholar is perfect master of it, it is erased, and a new one written.

The Birmans are extremely fond both of poetry and of music. They call the former *yeddoo*. When repeated by a scholar, it flows soft and measured to the ear; it is sometimes in successive, and often in alternate rhymes. A line is called *tagioung*, a stanza *tubbouk*. They have epic as well as religious poems of high celebrity, and they are fond of reciting in heroic verse the exploits of their kings and generals.* Music is a science held in high estimation. Although termed, in India as in Greece, the language of the gods, it is cultivated more generally in Birmah. The royal library of Amarapura is said to contain several treatises on the art. Some of the musicians display considerable skill and execution, and the softer airs are said to be very pleasing.† Among the principal instruments is a

* "It has been said, that his present majesty has a person of poetic talents, on whom he bestows his royal patronage, and who, in return, delights the 'precious ear' with the measured lines of his own composition.... Prose works are commonly read, as well as poetry, and are some of them works of fiction, and others religious. Of the latter kind, the *Dzat* and *Woottoo*, or those books which illustrate the influence of merit and demerit, are most extensively read. Historical works are scarce, and therefore but little read. Few individuals have the means or the opportunity of collecting private libraries."—HOUGH *on the Manners of the Burmese. Friend of India*, No. xii. p. 12.

† "In the music of the Burmese," the Rev. Mr. Hough says, "there is far more noise than harmony. They make use of wind and stringed instruments, brass plates of different tones, and drums of various sizes. For the sake of noise, they will accompany the instrumental music by striking together two pieces of split bamboo on the palms of their hands. They are evidently unacquainted with the nature of tones and harmony, all their airs being wild, irregular, and discordant."—*Friend of India*, No. xii. p. 11. In founding these brass musical plates, they must be allowed to shew considerable art. Their tones are exceedingly fine, sur-

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

soum or harp, made of light wood, hollowed and varnished, in shape somewhat like a canoe with a deck: at the extremity, a piece of hard wood is neatly fastened, which tapers to the end, and rising, curves over the body of the harp; from this curvature, the strings, usually made of wire, are extended to a bridge on the belly of the instrument. There are two sounding-holes, one on each side of the bridge. It varies from two to five feet in length. The *turr* resembles our violin, but has only three strings; it is played on with a bow. The *pullaway* is a common flageolet. The *kye-zoup* is a collection of cymbals suspended in a bamboo frame, producing modulated gradations of sounds: they vary in size and number. The *patola*, or guitar, is a curious instrument, exactly resembling a crocodile in miniature: the body is hollow, with sounding-holes on the back; three strings of wire extend from the shoulder to the tail, and are supported on bridges at each extremity. The strings are tuned by means of pegs in the tail, to which they are fastened; it is played on by the finger, and accompanies the voice. The *boundaw* is a collection of drums, oblong in form and varying in size, which are suspended perpendicularly, in a wooden frame, by leathern thongs. The whole machine is about five feet in diameter and four feet high. They accompany full bands, and are used in processions, being carried by two men, while the performer shuffles along between them, playing as he goes. The *heem* is the pipe of Pan, of reeds neatly joined together, with a mouth-piece: it produces a very plaintive melody.*

passing the finest bells in power and sweetness, and the vibration is prolonged to an astonishing degree. Plates of this description are worn by the priests, suspended to the neck, and are used as bells.

* Dr. Buchanan purchased a whole set of these musical instruments for 54 *tocals* (between five and six guineas).

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

The Birmans are cheerful and fond of music: not a boatman of the crew, Col. Symes observes, but had some instrument to beguile the hours; and he who could procure no better, had what we call a Jew's harp. They greatly excel in the art of gently striking masses of metal so as to elicit the most melodious and ringing sounds.

The ancient game of chess, called *chit-tha-reen*, is in high estimation among the higher classes. Their board is exactly the same as ours, containing sixty-four squares, and the pieces are the same in number, sixteen on each side, but vary very considerably from ours in power. They have the king and his minister on two elephants, (a piece with the power of the queen is unknown among them,) two *rut-ha* or war-chariots, two *chein* or elephants, two *mhee* or cavalry, and eight *yein* or foot troops. Each party is arranged on three lines, so that eight squares are left unoccupied; and the whole scheme is rendered more complex than ours. The game is of very high antiquity among them, and is even authorised by their sacred writings, although every play of chance is prohibited.

The Birmans, like the Chinese, have no coin, silver in bullion and lead being the current monies of the country. Weight and purity are of course the standard of value: in the ascertainment of both, the natives are exceedingly scrupulous and expert. The *tecal* or *kiat* is the most general piece of silver in circulation: it weighs 10 pennyweights, 10 grains, and $\frac{3}{4}$. Its subdivisions are, the *tubbee*, two of which make one *moo*, two *moo* one *math*, four *math* one *tecal*, and 100 *tecal* one *viss*. Weights are all made at the capital, where they are stamped, and then circulated through

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

the country: all others are forbidden. Rice is sold by a measure called *tayndaung*, or basket: the weight is 16 *viss* (about 56 lbs).

The Birmah measures of length are, a *paul-ghaut*, or inch, 18 of which compose the *taim* or cubit; the *saundaung*, or royal cubit, of 20 inches; and the *dha*, or bamboo, which consists of seven royal cubits = 11 feet 8 inches: 1000 *dha* make one Birman league, or *dain*, nearly equal to two miles two furlongs, British. The league is also subdivided into tenths. The Birmans, like the Chinese, keep their accounts in decimals.

In their physiognomy, the Birmans bear a nearer resemblance to the Chinese, than to the natives of Hindostan. The women are fairer than the Hindoo females, but not so delicately formed; they are, however, well made, and in general inclined to corpulence; their hair is black, coarse, and long. The men are not tall, but active and athletic, and have a very youthful appearance, from the custom of plucking their beards. In their temperament, which is lively, choleric, and restless, they present a striking contrast to the languid inactivity of the Hindoos. Dr. Buchanan describes them as of a short, squat, robust, fleshy make, with a face somewhat in shape of a lozenge, the forehead and chin being sharpened, while at the cheek-bones it is very broad. The eye-brows or superciliary ridges project very little; the eyes are very narrow, and placed rather obliquely, the external angles being the highest; the nose is small, but has not the flattened appearance of that feature in the negro; the nostrils, circular and divergent; the mouth in general well shaped; the hair harsh, lank, and black. Those who reside in the warmest climate do not acquire the deep hue of the negro or Hindoo; nor do

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

such as live in the coldest countries ever acquire the clear bloom of the European.* In common with all the Indo-Chinese races, in their shape and stature, square features, elongated eyes, yellow complexion, and lank locks, they bear a strong resemblance to the Mongol tribes. The Birmans have a tradition, that a colony of Mongols once arrived in their country, amounting in number to 700,000 men capable of bearing arms.† Such traditions, however, serve only to prove, that the original stock of these nations must have occupied these regions from time immemorial.

In Indo-China, as in Hindostan and in Egypt, remains of an indigenous race, of widely different character, are found occupying the recesses of the mountain ridges which stretch throughout the whole empire. Among these, one of the most remarkable are the Kiayns or Kayns, who extend over the mountainous and woody tract lying between Bengal, Arracan, Ava, and Cassay. They call themselves *Koloun*. Many of them, since the conquest of Arracan by the Birmans, have been induced to quit the mountains, and settle in the plains. "They speak a dialect peculiar to themselves, and appear distinct from all the surrounding tribes. They are remarkable for simple, honest industry and inoffensive manners, accompanied by the rudest notions respecting religion. They have no idea of a place of future reward and punishment, and deny the existence of sin in their country. They burn their dead, and collect the ashes,‡ which, after certain ceremonies, are carried to a place

* Asiat. Res., vol. v. p. 220.

† Probably this refers to the conquest of Mien by the great khan, mentioned by Marco Polo.

‡ This is a Tatar custom, and still prevails among the people of Tibet and in Yun-nan. P. Gerbillon says, that even the Chinese sometimes adopt it.—See MARSDEN'S *Marco Polo*, *note* 328.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

of interment, and on the sod which covers them is laid a wooden image of the deceased. They believe that their deity resides on the great mountain Gnowa, which the Birmans have never yet invaded. When a Kayn dies within the jurisdiction of the Birmans, the relations of the deceased always convey the urn and image of the departed person to this mountain, there to be deposited in the sacred earth. These people have no letters, nor any law except custom, to which the Birmans leave them, never interfering in their municipal or social economy. The females of this tribe have their faces tattoed all over in lines, mostly describing segments of circles, which give them a most extraordinary and hideous appearance."*

The Carayns, Karaian, or Carianers, are another singular people. They are supposed to be originally from the province of Yun-nan, but are now widely scattered over the empire. Col. Symes, on the authority of a respectable Italian missionary, represents them as "a simple, innocent race, speaking a language distinct from that of the Birmans, and entertaining rude notions of religion. They lead quite a pastoral life, and are the most industrious subjects of the state. Agriculture, the care of cattle, and rearing poultry, are almost their only occupations. A great part of the provisions used in the country is raised by the Carianers; and they particularly excel in gardening." Dr. Buchanan adds, that they have sufficient knowledge of the useful arts to manufacture comfortable, and even handsome clothing.† They are a peaceable people, disinclined to war, and it is universally agreed, that

* Symes, Buchanan, &c. in Hamilton's Gazetteer.

† Col. Francklin, speaking of the Birmans generally, says, "To their women alone must be ascribed the merit of weaving and dyeing." Col. Symes, on visiting the queen mother, saw the females in the palace busily engaged at the loom.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

their morals are good; but, like the Kiayns, if, indeed, they are not the same people, they have no laws, are wholly illiterate, and, though they believe in a future state, have no notion of its being a state of retribution.* Whether these Tibetian tribes are aboriginal inhabitants, older than the Birmans, or remains of Chinese colonists, their affinity to the Tartar tribes is obvious and decided. Many of their customs attach equally, however, to the Birmans, as will be seen from the following valuable account of the manners and customs of the Birmans, by the Rev. G. H. Hough, some time resident in that empire, for which we are indebted to a recent number of "The Friend of India," published at Serampore in Bengal.

"There is perhaps no country in the world, in which the sway of despotism has been less controlled by any correct feeling or sentiment, or which exhibits a stronger specimen of its injurious effects upon the physical and moral powers of mankind, than the Birman dominions.....The obstacles to mental and moral improvement there, however, are neither so numerous nor so formidable as those which have presented themselves in India.

"Caste, which has separated the Indian community into so many diversified sects, and the motto of which is, 'taste not, handle not,' has no existence in the Birman empire. There, society is founded on a basis that would admit the existence of the most liberal

* Asiat. Res., vol. vi. p. 300. In Marsden's Marco Polo, (*note* 826.) the learned editor cites P. Gaubil and De Guignes as authorities for the opinion, that Karaian is the north-western part of the province of Yun-nan, which is bounded in great measure by the Kiu-sha-kiang. Its capital is said to have been Yachi (Ye-chu or Yao-cheu), afterwards changed to Tali-fu, on the western bank of the lake Siul. Karazan or Kalashan is either the same province or another district of Yun-nan, further westward.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

institutions. There, no individual, through fear of personal defilement, is deterred from acting in every case according to those rules which secure entire freedom of intercourse between man and man. While, in many other countries, official rank, wealth, and respectability of character, create the only lines of distinction, the path to honour and influence is here equally open to all without the least distinction.

" The priests have their religious peculiarities; but even these have no relation to caste. These peculiarities are seen in their monastic habits, their yellow apparel, their shaven heads, their unshod feet, their sober, meditative demeanour, and in their morning perambulations to receive the voluntary contributions of the people. Their monasteries may be considered as the literary as well as the religious institutions of the country. Into these, without restricting themselves to any limited term, young men in their noviciate enter, considering it as a merit which will hereafter meet its sure reward, to deny themselves indulgences enjoyed by other men, to assume the yellow cloth, to deprive the head of that ornament which nature has bestowed, to taste the fancied sweets of abstraction, and employ their minds in committing to memory extracts from the books they esteem sacred. The age or previous character of candidates for the priesthood, forms no objection to their admittance. Present intention is the only subject of investigation, and this is done by an established catechetical form. Persons of all ages, from the mere youth to the hoary head, assume the sacred habiliments and character: even conjugal and paternal affection are not unfrequently smothered by the superstitious wish of self-consecration to this sacred order. To reject a wife and family, to abandon them to distress and suffering, are esteemed

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

acts of religion in any individual who wishes to enter it; and his thus doing is deemed an eminent attainment in piety, and a meritorious result of self-denial. It is related that Gautama, the last Boudh, in one of his incarnations, while heir-apparent to the throne, not only suffered banishment to a remote and solitary place for giving away a white elephant, but, during the term of his expiation, attained to such an eminent degree of self-denial, as to yield up first his son and daughter to slavery, and then his wife to the importunities of another.

" The priests perform no labour, except what is considered as particularly meritorious, and this consists in eradicating the grass and shrubs which sprout up around their monasteries and pagodas. They never ride on horseback, nor eat after the sun has passed the meridian. Such is their reverence for the yellow cloth which covers their bodies, that they view it as disgraceful to pass underneath any building, or convey themselves through any aperture, while to do so even by bending the head, would save them the trouble of avoiding any obstruction in their path. They restrain their minds from all attachment to the fair sex; and no female ventures to approach a priest, unless to perform some religious duty, or to present some pious offering. Their public duties consist of recitations from the *Dxats*, said to be revelations of Gautama relating to his own history throughout his previous transmigrations, in which the consequences of works of merit and demerit are illustrated by his own personal example; and in repeating extracts from other writings esteemed sacred, which tend to enforce the duties of morality as taught in their system of religion. On days of public worship, they edify their congregations, which assemble in *xayats* (or sheds) contiguous

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

to some pagoda of importance, by repeating their liturgy or form of religious service, when the auditory evince their devotion by their humble posture, by elevating their hands with the palms united, and by regular responses. The priests affect the most entire disinterestedness in the discharge of their sacred functions; but their worldly wants are always amply supplied, and they uniformly receive the tribute of a reverential public. Even their monasteries are not approached or passed with the feet covered. Many of them are learned in the Pali or Magudha, but the great majority exhibit evident marks of mental sloth and inanity.

"The sacred writings of the Brimans are reported to have been transcribed in the most miraculous manner, in one day, from the original copies first put into a legible form by *yahans* (*rahaans*), or priests, on the island of Thee-ho (Ceylon), nearly 400 years after the supposed annihilation of Guatama, and about a century previous to the Christian era.* These writings, embracing every science, natural and religious, within the scope of their author's reputed universal and infallible knowledge, amount to some thousands. Few of them are read by the priests, and fewer still by the reading part of the public. The middling and lower classes of society are content with knowing little more of the principles of their religion than what is ascertained from the public ritual. This announces the three grand objects of religious homage;

* "There is a tradition among the Cingalese, that one of the kings of Hindostan, immediately after Boodhu's death, collected together 500 learned ascetics, and persuaded them to write down on palmyra leaves, from the mouth of one of Boudhu's principal disciples, all the doctrines taught by Boodhu in his life-time."—WARD'S *View of the Hindoos*, vol. ii. p. 211.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

God (or his substitute, a pagoda or image); Fate, or the immutable law or course of things; and the Priesthood. The fundamental moral precepts are five, and are merely prohibitory: they forbid the destruction of animal life, theft, lying, adultery, and drinking ardent spirits. The doctrine of transmigration is most firmly believed, and also the final annihilation of animal life, and the destruction of material substances. Every thing is mutable but fate, which is eternal; and while that ordains the final destruction of present things, it has provided that another material universe shall of itself necessarily arise, and thus successively, *ad infinitum*. Even their God is the subject of merit or demerit; he has undergone incarnations as beast, as man, and as a celestial being; he has been repeatedly punished millions of years in hell, has enjoyed ages of sensual happiness in the *Nat* country, and is now in *Niekbaan*, or annihilation.

"The Birmans, considering the moral features of their religious system, and their being surrounded with objects of misery, both among beasts and their own species, which they are taught to contemplate as the effects of retributive justice awarded by irresistible and unmerciful fate, ought to be a pious and orderly race of men. In this respect, however, little can be said in their favour. Of their religious character it may be observed, that while it exhibits little of personal concern and anxiety, and appears to be unmixed with enthusiasm, it manifests on all occasions a sufficiently conspicuous faith in the religion of their country. The religion, being national, is therefore popular, and every appearance of dissent is deemed to present just cause for criminal prosecution. The Birmans do not appear to be so deeply impressed with cordial regard for their religion, as with the duty of

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

conformity. They exhibit, in matters of religion, just that state of mind and that exterior deportment which might be expected from a people, among whom secular authority claims dominion over the free exercise of conscience. The despot of the realm by one word could annihilate Boodhism, with all its monumental memorials and imagery, and with the same ease could ordain the observance of a new religion.

"The days of public worship are pointed out by the change, the first quarter, the full, and the last quarter of the moon.* Those of the full and new moon are observed with more general attention. The grand annual festival happens at the beginning of their year, — about March. During three days, religious prostrations, music and dancing, masquerades, pugilism, throwing water upon one another, puppet-shows, and comic scenes, make up the festive jumble. Religious duties consist in building pagodas and ornamenting them with gold leaf; in forming large and small images of Gautama; in erecting monasteries, zayats, and bridges; in digging tanks; in supporting the priesthood by donations of food, cloth, &c.; in prostrations before pagodas and images, and in presenting before them lighted candles, clusters of flowers, umbrellas of various descriptions, rice, and fruits; in erecting high poles, and suspending long flags on their tops; in casting bells, and hanging them near their pagodas; or contributing to any of these objects; in attention to the recitations of the priests, and whenever an offering is made, expressing a wish that the merits of it may be enjoyed. The use of the bells is, to proclaim to the celestial regions the fact of present-

* The four quarters of the moon are, in like manner, festival days among the Cingalese.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

ing an offering; and the person who thus announces the fact, is both worshipper and bellman.

" Nearly allied to the religion of the Birmans are their superstitious ideas. They have their fortunate and unfortunate days, and no affair of importance is undertaken without consulting astrologers. The particular day and hour, with the position of the planets, are carefully observed on the birth of a child. A man's fortune may be read on the lines of the palm of his hand. They believe in the existence of evil spirits, ghosts, and witches, in demoniacal possessions, and the use of charms. According to their ideas, the cholera morbus has been several times expelled from Rangoon by the noise produced by the simultaneous discharge of cannons and muskets, and beating the houses with bamboos. In the year 1823, when the cholera was extensively fatal, the supreme court at Ava issued an order that the inhabitants should wear the title of the heir-apparent, written on a small slip of paper, in the hole of the lobe of their ears, as an infallible specific against the effects of that destructive demon.* If a vulture perch upon a house, some awful calamity threatens its inhabitants, and they immediately abandon it. The doctrine of transmigration leads them into the absurdity of propitiating their future destiny by offerings of food to animals: a deceased friend may

* Capt. Cox relates a disgusting instance of this medical superstition. A criminal's body was exposed above ground, pinned to the earth, and left to rot. " The king's doctor cut off the tip of his nose, ears, lips, tongue, and fingers, which, with some of his blood, is to form a compound in some medicine of wonderful efficacy in insuring longevity and prosperity to those who are so happy as to obtain a portion of it from his majesty's bounty. This is one of the palace nostrums, of which there are many others equally mystic in the preparation, and wonderful in the operation. These his majesty occasionally dispenses to the credulous multitude.' —Cox's *Journal*, p. 342.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

thus be nourished in the form of a four-footed or feathered animal, and, in some future period of existence, the good deed be repaid with ample interest. Carved images of the most ridiculous shapes are to be seen in many places, the supposed representatives of different *nats* or demons. Astrologers are numerous, and obtain the means of subsistence by the practice of their profession. A great proportion of them are Brahmuns, or professors of Hindooism, here called *Pounas*, who have been born in the country, or have emigrated from Assam or Hindostan. Birmans also embrace the profession. The order is highly respected, but not esteemed so sacred as that of the priesthood. The medical department is peculiarly subject to the control of superstition. Its influence is often seen in the collection of medicinal roots, the method of compounding medicines, and the time and manner of administering them. Of books which treat of the nature of diseases, the virtues of medicinal roots and plants, the art of compounding them, and their specific qualities, they have a considerable number. Shops of drugs and medicines are in full proportion to the wants of the public. With surgery they are wholly unacquainted.

" Their funeral solemnities are conducted with decency. The manner of disposing of the dead is either by incineration or burial: the former is esteemed the most honourable. The corpse is enclosed in a coffin, ornamented with gold leaf or otherwise, according to the means of the friends of the deceased, and, followed by the mourners dressed in white, is borne to the public place of interment, (which is without the city or town,) the procession being usually preceded by the music of wind-instruments and drums, and the presents intended for the priests

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

who may be invited on the occasion. These presents usually consist of pieces of cotton cloth, sugar-cane, and fruits of various kinds. On their arrival at the place of incineration, fuel is placed under the coffin, the moveable ornaments being first taken away; and the corpse is consumed, after which the bones are interred. Infants and criminals are buried, as also the poorest part of the community. All funeral processions must pass out of the city by a particular gate, called the Funeral Gate; and no corpse must be carried towards a city or town where the governors usually reside. The banks of the Irrawaddy are not selected for the performance of funeral obsequies, like the banks of the Ganges: neither are its waters regarded as possessing any sacred qualities, nor are they in the least degree the object of superstitious reverence. The business of the priests at funerals is, to recite some portion of their sacred books, and to receive presents; but it is not customary for them to take any other part in funeral ceremonies, unless at the incineration of their own order, in which they render personal assistance. As food is generally given them, and they do not eat in the afternoon, funerals are usually attended in the morning. It is customary to preserve the corpses of priests a long time previously to incineration. This is done by embalming the body, after removing those parts and fluids most liable to become offensive, and then covering it with gold leaf.*

* "When a priest dies, he has peculiar honours paid him. Several months since, a neighbouring priest died, or *returned*, for the Burmans think it undignified to say that *a priest dies*. His body was immediately wrapped up in tar and wax; holes were perforated through the feet and some distance up the legs, into which one end of a hollow bamboo was inserted, and the other fixed in the ground. The body was then pressed and squeezed, so that its fluids were forced down through the legs, and conveyed off by

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

"In the construction of their dwelling-houses, bamboo, of which there are several species, and in great abundance, is the principal, and in many instances the only material used. Holes, two or three feet deep in the earth, receive the posts, which are more or fewer according to the size of the houses. Mats, made of split bamboos, form the outside covering, inside partitions, and sometimes the floor. But

means of the bamboos. In this state of preservation the body has been kept. For some days past, preparations have been making to burn this *sacred relic*, and to-day it has passed away in fumigation. On four wheels was erected a kind of stage or tower, about twelve or fifteen feet high, ornamented with paintings of different colours, and figures, and small mirrors. On the top of this was constructed a kind of balcony, in which was placed the coffin, decorated with small pieces of glass of different hues; and the corpse, half of which was visible above the edge of the coffin, was covered with gold leaf. Around the tower and balcony were fixed several bamboo poles, covered with red cloth, displaying red flags at their ends, and small umbrellas glittering with spangles; among which was one longer than the others, covered with gold leaf, shading the corpse from the sun. Around the upper part of the balcony was suspended a curtain of white gauze, about a cubit in width, the lower edge of which was hung round with small pieces of isinglass. Above the whole was raised a lofty quadrangular pyramid, graduating into a spire, constructed in a light manner of split bamboo, covered with small figures cut out of white cloth, and waving to and fro for some distance in the air. The whole, from the ground to the top of the spire, might measure fifty feet. This curious structure, with some *living* priests upon it, was drawn half a mile by *women* and *boys*, delighted with the sport, and in the midst of a large concourse of shouting and joyous spectators. On their arrival at the place of burning, ropes were attached to the hinder end of the car, and a whimsical sham contest, by adverse pulling, was for some time maintained, one party seeming to indicate a reluctance to have the precious corpse burned. At length, the foremost party prevailed, and the body must be reduced to ashes. Amidst this, there were loud shoutings, clapping of hands, the sound of drums, of tinkling and wind instruments, and a most disgusting exhibition of female dancing, but no weeping or wailing. The vehicle was then taken to pieces, the most valuable parts of which were preserved, and the body was consumed."—JUDSON'S *Account*, pp. 82, 3.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

commonly the latter is made by splitting the material into quarters, laying them down in a series, and tying them to the transverse poles with split rattans. Leaves of the Nipah tree, called here *danee*, compose the roof; and a house not positively uncomfortable, and sufficiently capacious for a small family, is constructed at the moderate expense of thirty or forty rupees. Men of high rank and ample means build their houses in the same form with posts of teak; the sides, partitions, and floor are boards of the same wood, and the roof is made either of leaves or of flat tiles. These tiles are burnt like bricks, each about eight inches long, five broad, and nearly one thick, jutting over at the head about an inch, by which they retain their positions upon the rafters. They are laid double, the lower edges of one series projecting over and lying upon the heads of the next lower series; thus forming a defence from wind and rain, and presenting a good degree of security from exterior fires. The monasteries are built in the same manner, having two or three roofs elevated one above another, and in many instances, their cornices, angles, and eaves ornamented with carved work of flowers, figures of elephants, of priests, and of other forms which have no existence but in the superstition of the people. The posts of the houses and monasteries, being inserted from two to four or five feet in the ground, are subject to the depredations of white ants, and to rapid decay. The old palace at Amarapoora is built of teak: the roofs piled upon each other to a great height, and diminishing in size as they ascend, present the appearance of a lofty spire. The exterior and interior parts are covered with gold leaf, and the whole exhibits a resplendent object to the beholder. His present majesty, who ascended the throne of his

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

grandfather about June 1819, has since built a new palace at Ava, a few miles below the former capital, of which he took possession about March 1824. The pagodas are solid masses of masonry, varying in height, of a conical form, covered with plaster, composed of sand and lime, and many of them with gold leaf. The large pagoda situated about a mile and a half to the N.W. of Rangoon, and called *Shwa-dagon Porah*, is a splendid and magnificent monument of heathen superstition and idolatry. According to its history, the foundation was laid soon after the supposed annihilation of Gautama. If this be true, it must have existed for a period of about 2,300 years. Since its erection, its size has been increased by successive additions.

" From the above description of their dwelling-houses, the transition is easy to a correct inference relative to the furniture which they contain. A few mats answer the purpose of beds, couches, chairs, and tables; and two or three wooden plates of Birman manufacture, or of coarse earthen-ware imported, form the breakfast and dinner service. A small box or two, or as many baskets, contain the wardrobe of the family. Those, however, who have the means, indulge themselves in the use of a bedstead. Although, in their houses and persons, the appearance of cleanliness is not very striking, yet, in this respect, they are on a par with their western neighbours. But this is not saying much in their favour. They certainly do not exhibit, particularly in their houses, any special regard to neatness; nor, on the other hand, can they be considered as inattentive to personal appearance. Both sexes enjoy the comfort of frequent bathing. They are much addicted to the practice of chewing betel; and in the disposition of the saliva, they are

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

not particularly nice. The more respectable class accommodate themselves with *pig-dannies* and betel-boxes, the bearers of which are in constant attendance. These materials are of gold, silver, or less valuable metal, according to the rank or circumstances of those who use them. They universally anoint the head with oil; and as the hair is permitted to grow to its natural length and density without the frequent application of a comb, a convenient situation is afforded for the accommodation of vermin; and as the Birman religion prohibits the destruction of life, their propagation is seldom interrupted, except by casualties.

"On public days, days of worship, and when visiting, it is an object with them to put on the appearance of neatness in their persons and apparel. The women are usually dressed in long, loose, white cotton gowns, with petticoats of cotton, cotton and silk, or silk, of vari-coloured stripes. The men wear gowns a little similar to those of the women, with cotton or silk plaid cloth decently wrapped around their loins, and hanging in front below the knees. The women wear their hair collected into a knot on the back part of the head, while the men twist theirs into a spiral form upon the top, encircling the head either with a checquered or a white muslin kerchief folded to a narrow width. The men commonly tattoo themselves with various figures upon the thighs, the abdomen, and the loins. The shoes of both sexes protect only the sole of the foot, having two loops, into which the great toe and the other four are inserted: they are manufactured of wood, or of hides. The women, to render themselves more attractive, rub their faces with a fine powder, made of the bark of a species of sandal highly odoriferous, and sometimes colour with a beautiful red, the nails of their fingers and toes.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

"In the management of internal household affairs, the wife takes the principal share. She goes herself to the market, or directs purchases to be made, and superintends the cooking, or does it with her own hands. As opportunity presents, she brings in her contribution to the domestic establishment, by spinning, weaving, trafficking in bazar articles, or by keeping a shop and vending merchandise. In conducting the general family concerns, she is by no means excluded: her judgement is consulted, given with perfect freedom, and seldom entirely disregarded. The female branches of the family are not recluses here, neither are they reserved or shy in their manners; they form a constituent part of domestic and public society. They esteem it happy to become mothers, but consider the birth of a son as a more fortunate event than that of a daughter. They in general nurse their children till they arrive at the age of three or four. As they are seldom blessed with a numerous progeny, the increase of population is slow.... The wife of a judge or governor is often seen at his side, assisting in the decision of causes; and the wives of viceroys and other high officers are often permitted to hold their own courts, and decide independently on petitions presented to them. Women of all ranks enjoy a high degree of freedom, appear abroad unveiled whenever they choose, ornamented according to the taste and fashion of the country, and add zest to public scenes of amusement by their presence and gayety.

"In the formation of their matrimonial connexions, there is generally an appropriate preface of personal acquaintance and plighted love. In the ceremony of marriage, little expense is incurred either of time or of money. A feast of good things, according to the

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

ability of the bridegroom, is prepared, in which the assembled family connexions participate. The married pair taste a mixture of the tea-leaf steeped in oil, (which is the form of sealing all contracts,) eat together from the same plate, and, exchanging their reciprocal promises, they twain are made one flesh. Unfortunately, however, for the perpetuity of conjugal felicity, in no country, perhaps, is the marriage-contract regarded with so little respect, or maintained with so little propriety as in Birmah. No disgrace is attached to a divorced husband or wife. Slight occasions originate verbal abuse, and these quarrels are often protracted till both parties seek that remedy which is to be found, in their country, in any common court of justice. Polygamy is not only allowed, but abounds in this country. Money is not offered to obtain a female as a wife, but for the purchase of bond-maids as concubines. If a concubine of this sort wishes to be released, the terms of her departure are made easy. A high sense of female chastity not being prevalent, the consequences are obvious. The male sex conceive themselves by nature, both physically and mentally, the superior; hence are seen lordship in the one sex, and subjection in the other. A brother exercises over a sister, and a husband over a wife, control at pleasure, and applies, if need require, the shoe, the rod, the foot, the palm of the hand, or even the point of the elbow, to correct the frowardness or obstinacy of the weaker vessel. Among the higher and more polite circles, however, this right is not so much exercised as acknowledged.

"Generosity and hospitality are not among the practical virtues of the Birmans; on the contrary, they are cold-hearted, unfeeling, and suspicious, contemplating misery and suffering, in whatever form, with

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

apathy. No public institutions of benevolence appear to proclaim a general interest in the comfort or convenience of the less happy. Avarice and selfishness, the two ruling passions of the Birmans, preclude the exercise of right feeling towards others. To the existence of such a state of feeling, it is probable the nature of the government contributes. The petty acts of tyranny practised by the subordinate civil officers, are a terror to the public, and create between man and man that jealousy and suspicion which destroy confidence, and annihilate the best feelings of humanity. The writer of this article beheld, in the eastern road leading from the town of Rangoon to the great pagoda, a Birman lying on the ground under the suspension of his faculties by a fit. He fell while walking with a companion, which was no sooner discovered by the latter, than he departed with all possible speed. No individual approached the miserable sufferer. The writer, not aware of any evil consequence, went towards him, when several voices from individuals at a distance urged him to retire. On inquiring their reasons, they replied: "You will meet with difficulty from Government; the man may report that he has been deprived of something, and you may be called upon to answer as a thief.' This was an effectual check to any offer of assistance. In such a state of things there can be found little benevolence, kindness, or hospitality in exercise, particularly towards strangers.

"Travelling by boats, which affords the greatest personal comfort, presents the danger of bands of robbers, who often attack with knives and muskets, and make a 'clear sweep' of whatever portable effects can be seized, to the jeopardy, and frequently to the destruction of the lives of their possessors. It is but

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

just to add, however, that the view which these remarks would otherwise present, should in some respects be qualified. There are recognised among the Birmans, friendly relations and ties of consanguinity, which, in private life, are seen so to operate as to soften in some degree the sterner features of their public character. Among relatives and friends between whom there is a mutual and thorough acquaintance, feelings which originate generous actions, the duties of hospitality, kind deportment and sympathy, prevail over those views of mere personal consideration, which govern the general course of their lives in their civil connexion with one another. They are certainly not incapable of strong attachments; and could their public character be formed in a different mould from that in which their system of government has already cast it, they would be by no means destitute of those elementary principles which combine to form the happiness of civilised society." *

Little will remain to be added to these details, as regards the manners and customs of the Birmans; but, in order that the reader may have a just idea of their religion, it will be necessary to lay before him a brief view of the history of the Buddhic faith.

HISTORY OF BUDDHISM.

THE origin of Buddhism, which, under some modification or other, is the religion of the Birman empire, Siam, Ceylon, Japan, Anam, and the greater part of China, is involved in considerable obscurity. There is strong reason, however, to believe, that it is of the

* Friend of India, No. xii. 1824.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

highest antiquity; that it was substantially the ancient faith of India, the Brahminical superstition being the invention of later times; for it is certain, Mr. Ward says, "that, among the six schools of philosophy formerly famous among the Hindoos, two of them inculcated doctrines respecting the first cause of things that were decidedly atheistical, or such as the followers of Boodhŭ maintain at this day; and it is indisputable, according to the Hindoo writings, that these two sects were numerous before the appearance of Boodhŭ." The word Boodhŭ or Buddha, which signifies the wise or the sage, admits of a various application, that has served not a little to perplex the subject. It is the title of the Hindoo Mercury,* the Woden of the northern nations, traces of whose worship are to be found in almost every primitive language; but the historical Budha is quite a different personage; or rather, there can be no doubt that, as in the case of Zoroaster, under that name several distinct personages have been confounded. The distinguishing tenet of the religion, or, as it has been correctly termed, the *atheology* of these nations, is the substitution of an incarnation of the divine energy, in some deified hero or sage, for the Creator of all things, who is reduced to a mere abstraction, unintelligent, and differing little from the Eternal Matter of the western atheists. They believe, in common with the Hindoos, that there is one God, but so completely

* "This god has four arms; in one hand he holds the discus, in another a club, in another a scimitar, and with the fourth is bestowing a blessing. He rides on a lion, is of a placid countenance, and wears yellow garments." He was the eldest son of Somu or Chundru, the moon, whence he is called Soumyŭ, and from his mother, Rouhineyu. Wednesday (Boodhŭ-varŭ) is sacred to him: in Siamese, it is called *Van-Phoodh*, the day of Phoodh, Boodh, or Fo.—See WARD'S *View of the Hindoos*, vol. i. p. 92.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

abstract in his essence, that he is not the object either of worship, of hope, or of fear; that he is even destitute of intelligence, and remains in a state of profound repose, except at times, when, united to energy, he becomes possessed of qualities, and creates worlds. This energy, it is said, exists separate from Bramha in his abstract state, as smothered embers, and is, like himself, eternal. Among the regular Hindoos, the beings supposed to possess most of this energy are the gods, the giants, the bramhuns, and devout ascetics: among the heterodox sects of Buddhists, Jains, and some others, ascetics are almost exclusively considered as the favoured depositaries of the Divine energy. This "indwelling scheme," as it has been termed, is the prominent feature of all the systems of paganism throughout the East. The doctrine of incarnations, that of transmigration, the adoration of the deified elements or of deified heroes, of Vishnoo, of Budha, of the Lama, of Fo, of the cow, of the elephant, all rest upon the same basis. The divine energy, wherever it is supposed to reside, or *the abstract idea of power in alliance with some material form*, is, under some modification or other, the universal object of worship. "Exactly conformable to the Hindoo idea," remarks Mr. Ward, "was the declaration respecting Simon Magus: 'This man is *the great power of God*.' And in union with this notion, all these people embrace the doctrine of transmigration, and the efficacy of religious austerities to restore these emanations of the deity, dwelling in matter, to the Great Spirit from which they issued." *

* See Ward's View of the Hindoos, vol. i. pp. i.—ix; xvii.; vol. ii. pp. 206, 306, &c. These notions of the Hindoo philosophers are essentially the same as the system of Emanation, received not only by the Ionic philosophers, Thales and Anaximander, but by the

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

The Grand Lama is an hereditary living deity, before whom millions prostrate themselves. He dies only to re-appear in another form. Captain Turner, speaking of the religion of Tibet, says: "It seems to be the schismatical offspring of the religion of the Hindoos, deriving its origin from one of the followers of that faith, a disciple of Bouddhu, who first broached the doctrine which now prevails over the wide extent of Tartary. It is reported to have received its earliest admission in that part of Tibet bordering upon India, which hence became the seat of the sovereign Lamas, to have traversed Mantchieux Tartary, and to have been ultimately disseminated over China and Japan. Though it differs from the Hindoo in many of its outward forms, yet, it still bears a very close affinity with the religion of Brumha in many important particulars. The principal idol in the temples of Tibet is Mŭha-Moonee (the Great Philosopher), the Booddhŭ of Bengal, who is worshipped under these and various other epithets throughout the great extent of Tartary and among all nations to the eastward of the Brŭmhŭpootrŭ. He is styled Godŭmŭ or Goutŭmŭ in Assam

Pythagoreans, the followers of Heraclitus, and others. They held God to have been eternally united to matter in one whole, which they called Chaos, whence it was sent forth, and at a certain time brought into form by the energy of the divine inhabitant. This deity, far from being a simple spiritual essence, is a compound being, "the soul of the world inclosed in matter, the primeval energy, the prolific and vivifying principle dwelling in all animated existences." In fact, this atheistic system is that of the materialist, applied to the Divine Being, whose intelligence is made absolutely dependent on some mode of organisation. A learned bramhun, on having the well-known lines of Pope read to him, beginning,

"All are but parts of one stupendous whole,
Whose body Nature is, and God the soul,"—

started from his seat, and declared that the author must have been a Hindoo.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

and Ava; Shŭmŭnŭ, in Siam;* Amida Buth,† in Japan; Fohe, in China; Boodhŭ and Shakhŭ Moonee in Bengal and Hindoostan; and Dhŭrmŭ Rajŭ and Mŭha Moonee, in Bootan and Tibet."

The name under which the idol of Binnah is worshipped, is, as we have seen, Godama (Guadma, Guatama), the same as the Siamese Kodom, or Kodama; a word which is said to signify cow-herd, and, metaphorically, king; though Dr. Buchanan was assured by a Hindoo pundit, that it implies the eminently sage, which is the meaning of Boodha. There can be no doubt, that under this name a real personage is intended, although it perhaps admits of question, whether the Divine Philosopher to whom all these titles refer, be the same. The Birmans, in common with the other Buddhic nations, reckon three predecessors of Guadma Budha.‡ The *Zarado*, or arch-

* Or Sommono-kodam: *i. e.* Kodam (Godama) the saint. He is also known there under other titles, as *Prã-phut*, the high lord, Y-thee-pee-so, Pa-ka-wa, Ora-hang, &c. By the Cingalese, he is known under the name of Saka, or Sakya-muni, the astute sage. This is sometimes written Xaca, and again Shaknun and Shakmuny, and with the adjunct, *burchan* (the Tartar for deity), is corrupted by Marco Polo into Sogomon-barchan.—MARSDEN'S *Marco Polo*, note 1354. FINLAYSON'S *Siam*, p. 253.

† Boodh, Buth, Phoodh, Fohi, are evidently the same word under different forms. The Tamul, adding the termination en, makes it Pooden; whence Wod-en. *Amita*, in Chinese O-mee-to, the epithet applied to Buddha in China and Japan, is the Sancrit *Amita*, immeasurable, whence the Greek *αμετρον*.

‡ "The religion of the Birmans," Colonel Francklin says, "is that of the younger Buddha or Bhaddoo of the Hindoos, the ninth incarnation of Vishnoo; but the Birmans insist, that in his character of Weethandra, a prince of Godomha-it, he is a tenth incarnation of the divinity. The elder Buddha, or Rama the conqueror of Ceylon, which, in the ancient Pali, is called Dewi Lanca, they do not acknowledge as their legislator; his history is merely read as an amusing fable by their bards or musicians. I have a copy of his history: it agrees with the Indian legend, but

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

abbot of Birmah, at the solicitation of a Roman Catholic bishop, drew up an account of their tenets, in which the gods who have appeared in the present world, and who have obtained the perfect state of *nigban*, are said to be four; viz. Chau-cha-sam (or Kau-ka-than), Gonagom (Gau-na-gon), Gaspa (Katha-pa), and Godama.* The Sakya-muni of Ceylon (the Sogomon-barchan of Marco Polo, and the Shakhu-moonee of Bengal), has generally been

they call him Yama." We are not aware on what authority Rama is called the elder Budha. Ramŭ, or Rama, is the seventh incarnation of Vishnoo, Bulurama the eighth, Boodhŭ the ninth; but the origin of Buddhism is not to be found in these legends, which are of a more modern date. There are acknowledged to be *four* Buddhas; but there seems no connexion between this succession of sages and the nine incarnations of Vishnoo.

* This document then proceeds by question and answer. "*Q.* Of which of these gods ought the law at present to be followed? *A.* Of the god Godama.—*Q.* Where is the god Godama? *A.* Godama, at the age of thirty-five, having attained his divinity, preached his law for forty-five years, and brought salvation to all living beings. At eighty years of age he obtained nigban, and this happened 2362 years ago [from 1795]. Then Godama said: after I shall have departed from this earth, I will preserve my law and disciples for 5000 years; and he commanded that his images and relics should be worshipped, which has accordingly been ever since done.—*Q.* What is meant by obtaining *nigban*? *A.* When a person is no longer subject to any of the following evils, weight, old age, disease, and death, then he is said to have obtained *nigban*. Nothing, no place can give us an adequate idea of *nigban*: we can only say, that to be free from the four above-mentioned miseries, and to obtain salvation, is *nigban*. In the same manner as when any person labouring under a severe disease, recovers by the assistance of medicine, we say he has obtained health; but if any person wishes to know the manner or the cause of his thus obtaining health, it can only be answered, that to be restored to health signifies no more than to be recovered from disease: in the same manner only can we speak of *nigban*. And after this manner Godama taught." Reckoning the 2362 Birman years as equal to 2341 Julian years, this would place the death of Godama about 546 years B.C. Asiat. Res. vol. vi. p. 265. See also Ward's View, &c., vol. ii. p. 212.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

considered as the founder of the sect. M. la Loubére supposes the Siamese Somonocodom to be unquestionably the same person; and according to the sacred books, his father was Bali, king of Teve Lanca, or Ceylon. La Croze states, that the name of Fo before his apotheosis, was Xaca (Saka), and that, according to the best-established opinion, he was born in the isle of Ceylon.* The name of Sommonokodam (Godama) before he was deified, Mr. Finlayson was told, was Prā-si-Thāāt; his father's name was Soori-soo-thoght, and his mother, Pra-soori-maha-maya.† The general persuasion of the priests, we are told, is, that their religion had its origin in Lanca, or Ceylon, and many circumstances establish the close connexion between the Cingalese and the Siamese; but this is sufficiently to be accounted for, without supposing that Buddhism had its origin in that island.‡ If any stress can be

* Marsden's Marco Polo, note 1355. Bali is evidently only the word Pali, the name of the sacred language, and of the nation to whom the Buddhists belong; a proof that the Cingalese filiation of Godama is apocryphal.

† *Pra* is a mere affix, signifying lord: the other names are possibly mythological. One of the Siamese titles assigned by this Traveller to Buddha, that of *Ora-hang*, is the Siamese name of Adam's Peak, in Ceylon.

‡ Not only the religion and sacred language of Ceylon are the same as those of Birmah and Siam, but there are many proofs of an intimate connexion and commercial intercourse between that island and the Indo-Chinese states; as well as the clearest evidence that Ceylon derived alike its mythology, language, and priesthood from Magadha, or Bahar. The name of the island (Singhala) is clearly derived from *singh*, a lion; a distinctive appellation of the khetries, or military class. We have evidently the same word in Sincapoor (Singa-pura), as well as in Singhea in Bahar, Singepoorum and Singhboom in Orissa, &c. Sincapoor is said to have been founded by emigrants from Sumatra. In that island we find the Rakhan river, evidently the same as Arracan, and a town of Acheen,—the same name as the chief place on the Kank-kao river, which falls into the gulf of Siam. Salanga (Junkseylon) is apparently the same word as Lanca, the Siamese name of Ceylon.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

laid on the *Jatŭs*, or histories of the ten incarnations, Buddha, prior to his *first* incarnation as Temee, had, at a remote period, reigned in Varanusee (Benares) twenty years, and after an interval of 80,000 years, had been born and lived in Tavŭtingsa (Ceylon ?). This Maha-Sătwă (great saint), or Boodhŭ Sŭtwŭ, as he is called, would seem, indeed, at all events, not to be the first Buddha; but his earliest appearance is placed in Bahar. It is more to the purpose to remark, that the Cingalese admit that they received their religion from the hands of a stranger; and Mr. Ward thinks, that it was probably propagated in the Birman empire soon after its reception in Ceylon, that is, about four hundred and fifty years after Buddha's death. "The Birmans believe, that six hundred and fifty years after that event (about A.D. 107), in the reign of Maha-moonee, a bramhun, named Buddha-Ghosha, was sent to Ceylon, to copy the *Vishooddhimargŭ*, which includes all the Jatŭs, or histories of the incarnations of Buddha. Since then, many Birmans have translated and commented on these writings. In a work entitled 'The great History of the Birman and Pegu Kings,' it is recorded, that, during the *T'hioorŭ-kshutriyu* dynasty, no fewer than fifty-five translations were made, and as many comments written on these books. But the Birmans are believed to possess works of higher antiquity than the Jatŭs." *

There can be, we think, no doubt, that India, and that part of India which formed the kingdom of Magadha, or Benares, has the best claim to the honour of having given birth to Buddha Guadama. In fact, both Booddhu and Goutŭmŭ would seem, from the following account, given by Mr. Ward from Sanscrit documents,

* Ward, vol. ii. p. 211.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

to have been either family names or honorary titles of the Magadha dynasty.*

" About 700 years before the commencement of the Christian era, Vēērŭ-Vahoo, of the race of Goutŭmŭ, a person attached to one of these sects, destroyed his sovereign Bodhŭmŭllŭ, and immediately seized the throne of Delhi. This king, and his three immediate successors, reigned one hundred and eight years. Mŭhēē-pŭtee, or the lord of the earth, was the name

* The Scanda and Buddha puranas, the two sacred poems which describe the actions of Godama, among a multitude of matter extravagant beyond the stretch of imagination to portray, and defying all rational analysis, contain these few intelligible historic details. It seems that Sataketu, of the race of the gods, had resolved to descend to earth and to become incarnate, in order to instruct mankind. The house of Sacya Singu was in possession of the sixty-four indispensable virtues, and therefore the god assumed the human form in the family of Sudd-hodana, at Capiluvasu, in the kingdom of Magadha (South Bahar). His mother was Maha-divi. His wisdom puzzled his instructors in infancy. Repairing to Cushi, he took up his abode under a tree, and began a series of seven penances. He subsequently exemplified the duties of social life, and married Gopa, daughter of Sácshya; but finally renewed his penances, and became a complete Sanyasi. One thousand votaries were added to Buddha's disciples before he reached Gaya, the holy shrine near which he fixed his retreat. His mother, Maha-divi, afflicted at his tremendous penances, came down to remonstrate, but, instead of obeying, he fell down and worshipped her; for which act of extraordinary piety, together with his completion of the unutterable Yoga, the samyacsam-bodhi, the astonished gods fell down in adoration, and thus completed the earthly consecration of this incarnate deity. The Birmans adopt this purana, but add other particulars; among which, the artificer, Viswakarma, is introduced, presenting a large forest, created for the scene of Buddha's austerities. The king his father, and the neighbouring princes, who had attempted to seize his kingdom during his absence, turn anchorets, in imitation of the *rishi*, or saint; and even the horses and elephants in his father's train are so spiritualised, that, after having run wild on earth, they are born again in the six abodes of the gods. This legend, however, bears internal evidence of its relating to a personage far less important than the original Buddha.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

of the third of these monarchs; and as most of the writers on this subject agree in placing the era of Booddhŭ in the sixth century B.C., it seems reasonable to suppose, that Booddhŭ was the son or near relation of Mŭhĕĕ-pŭtee. If not connected with this family, why should the family name of this race, Goutŭmŭ, be one of the most common names of Booddhŭ ?* As the capital of the most powerful of the Hindoo monarchs of this period was in South Bahar, if Booddhŭ was not the son of one of the Mŭgŭdhŭ kings, it is possible he belonged to some branch of the family reigning at Benares, which was probably then a separate kingdom. In the Témee Jétŭ, a history of one of the incarnations of Booddhŭ, he is said to have been the son of a king of Benares, and to have persevered in choosing the life of an ascetic, against every possible artifice and persuasion of his royal parents. If then it be admitted that Booddhŭ was a person of royal descent, that he chose an ascetic life, and embraced a system of philosophy already prevalent in India, the other scenes of the drama require no assistance from conjecture: he became the patron and idol of the sect which from this time was distinguished by his name; he also received the support of the reigning monarchs, who were attached to him not only by holding the same philosophical opinions, but by the ties of blood.

"This sect being thus established by Mŭhĕĕ-pŭtee, the eleven Bouddhŭ monarchs who succeeded him, and who reigned 291 years, may reasonably be supposed to have done what the bramhŭns charged them with, to have obliterated the religion of their opponents.

"It is certain, however, that the learned adherents

* Titles of deity have sometimes been assumed as family names. Thus, among the kings of Sirinagur, several bore the name of *Deo*, others that of *Paal*, &c. See Asiat. Res. vol. vi. p. 338.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

of the bramhinical religion did not remain silent spectators of what they deemed the triumph of atheism. They contended with their equally learned opponents; and this dispute, as is manifest by the character of many of the works still read by the Hindoos, called forth all the talents of both sides: challenges to conduct the controversy in the presence of kings and learned assemblies were given and accepted. But here, as in innumerable other instances, the arm of power prevailed; and as long as the reigning monarchs were Bouddhŭs, the bramhŭns were obliged to confine themselves to verbal contentions.

"At length, Dhoorŭndhŭrŭ, of the race of Mŭyōōrŭ, destroyed Adityŭ, the last Bouddhŭ king, and assumed the sovereignty; and it is probable that from this time (about 300 years B.C.) we are to date the commencement of the persecutions of the Bouddhŭs.

"One or two facts tend to prove, that the bramhŭns were not much more mild and tolerant than other persecutors. Though a number of *Joinŭs* are scattered up and down in various parts of Hindoost'hanŭ, scarcely a vestige of the Bouddhŭ superstition is to be found, and all its adherents are seen in the adjoining countries. The fact respecting these persecutions is, however, placed beyond all doubt by the Prayŭshchittŭ-vivékŭ, a Hindoo work on atonements; from which we learn, that Oodŭyŭnacharjyŭ, a learned bramhŭn, and a fierce combatant against the Booddhŭs, actually burnt himself to death on a chaff-fire (kooshŭanŭlŭ), as an atonement for the sin of having excited the Hindoo kings to put to death many Bouddhŭ bramhŭns. To avoid the malice of their enemies, therefore, the Bouddhŭs emigrated to the neighbouring countries, and gave to the uncivilised inhabitants those doctrines for which they had been

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

unsuccessfully contending on the plains of Hindoost'hanŭ.

"We have no authentic documents to prove how long this persecution lasted; but it is a pretty current opinion among the most learned Bŭrmans, that the religion of Booddhŭ was introduced into that country about 450 years after his death. According to this statement, (admitting that the persecution began with Dhoorŭndhŭrŭ,) it will appear to have continued 183 years." *

According to this view of the subject, Godama, the fourth and last deity, and the founder of the present system of atheology which goes under the name of Buddhism, was an ascetic of royal birth, who lived about 2,370 years ago.† Having, like Zoroaster, Manes, Mahommed, and Abdul Wehhab, professed himself a religious reformer, he travelled over India, Ceylon, and other countries to propagate his doctrines.‡ His image uniformly represents him with

* Ward, vol. ii. pp. 207—10. See also Asiat. Res. vol. ix.

† A native of Ceylon assured Mr. Ward, that the Cingalese considered it to be about 2,500 years since the death of Gautama. Mr. Felix Carey, on the authority of the Birman history, made it, in 1813, 2,357 years since the birth of the god. According to other authorities, cited by Dr. Buchanan, both the Siamese and the Cingalese make Budha's death to have happened either 542 or 546 years B.C. The Chinese authorities state that Shaka lived 1028 years B.C. (see note at p. 106.) If any reliance could be placed on this opinion, it would go far to prove that Sakya-muni preceded Gautama by nearly 500 years.

‡ "When the Budhuist superstition was first introduced to the island of Ceylon, has never been satisfactorily determined; but the circumstances attendant on its introduction are set forth by the Singhalese historians in all the extravagant hyperbole of Eastern fable. According to their writings, Budhu visited Ceylon for the purpose of rescuing the natives from the tyranny of the demons, who covered the whole island, and exercised the most cruel tyranny over the inhabitants. So numerous were these malignant spirits, that, on the arrival of Budhu, they covered the whole ground, and

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

curling hair, like that of an African; his ears long, as if distended by heavy ear-rings, and in a sitting posture, with his legs folded. This physiognomy is remarkable, and may be admitted, perhaps, as an indication of the Ethiopic extraction of the Magadha dynasty, since Godama was clearly not a foreigner. In his lifetime, there is no reason to suppose that he set up for a god; and it would seem that, like all other pseudo reformers, he acknowledged certain predecessors in his office, Boudhas or wise men who had appeared before him. Who Kaukka-than, Gaunagon, and Kathapa were, can be but matter of conjecture; but it may be allowed us to suggest, that the original Boodha was probably the Eastern Hermes, the Mercury of the Hindoo pantheon, and the Boodha of the calendar. Of the five deities assigned to the present *kulpu*, or mundane period, four have already ap-

there was not sufficient space left for him to set his foot; and had a pin fallen, it could not have found its passage to the ground. Budhu, confident of the efficacy of his doctrines, directed his discourse to a part of the vast mass before him, which immediately yielded to its force, and became panic-struck by the superior power which was opposed to them. Availing himself of the confusion into which the demons were thrown, and perceiving a vacant space, Budhu descended, and occupied the spot. As he continued to preach, directing his sermons to every part of the vast circle which was formed around him, the demons gradually retired further from his presence, until they were all at length driven into the sea. Budhu then issued the following proclamation: 'Behold, I have conquered the malignant spirits who had so long and with such irresistible sway tyrannised over you. Fear demons no more! worship them no more!' This tradition, divested of the absurdities in which it is clothed, represents Budhu as a religious reformer, who finding the Singhalese devoted to the Kappooa system of demon-worship, endeavoured, by preaching some portion of truth, though mixed up with much error, to raise their minds from the degraded and enslaved state in which they had been held for ages. Success followed the persevering promulgation of the system, until it gained the ascendancy, and became the established religion of the island."—HARVARD'S *Mission to Ceylon*, p. liv.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

peared, including Godama, whose exaltation is to continue till the expiration of 5000 years, 2,368 of which have now expired. Another saint will then obtain the ascendancy and be deified.

The introduction of Buddhism into Indo-China appears to have been through different channels,—from Bengal and Assam, from Ceylon, and from China. It is evident that it must have had a footing in Birmah, before Budha-Gosha was deputed to visit the sacred isle to copy the *Jatŭs*. In fact, it must have been brought into the country with the first Pali emigration consequent on the overthrow of the Boudhic dynasty in Magadha, supposed to be 300 years B.C., even if it had not previously extended over these countries. It is highly remarkable, however, that the Birman era carries us up no higher than A.D. 638. This era is said to be that used by the astronomers of Siam, from whom, first the Taliens of Pegu, and then the Birmans are supposed, with great probability, to have adopted it.* The Siamese, there is reason to think, derived their religious lore and language from Laos on the borders of Yun-nan: in other words, they derived it from China.† But the worship of Fohi or

* "Whence the Birmans date their era, I could not learn from them. The akunwoon of the province of Pegu, the most intelligent man with whom we conversed, did not seem to know. He said, that whenever the king thought the years of the era too many, he changed it. The fact, I believe, is, that the era commencing in our year 638, is that used by the astronomers of Siam, and from them, as a more polished nation, it has passed to the Birmans, whose pride hindered them from acknowledging the truth."—*Asiat. Res.*, vol. vi. p. 171.

† "It is from this nation" (the Laws or Laos,) "that both the Birmans and Siamese allege they derive their laws, religion, and institutions. It is in the country of the Laos that all the celebrated founders of the religion of Buddha are represented to have left their most remarkable vestiges. Ceylon boasts the sacred traces

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

Buddha was not introduced into China till the first century of the Christian era; and the idol is said to have been imported from an island towards the west, which was probably Ceylon, about A.D. 66.* At that time, China was itself divided into petty kingdoms: these were subsequently reduced to two, the northern and the southern, and at length, under the usurper Yang-kien, were united into one empire, A.D. 585. His successor, the first monarch of the Tang dynasty, which lasted for nearly 300 years, began to reign in the year 626; a period so nearly answering to the Birman era, (especially when we allow for the difference between the Birman and the

of the left foot of Buddha on the top of the mountain Amali-sri-pali, or Adam's Peak. Siam exhibits the traces of the right foot on the top of the golden mountain Swa-na-bapato. Other traces of the sacred step are sparingly scattered over Pegu, Ava, and Arracan. But it is among the Laos that all the vestiges of the founder of this religion seem to be concentered, and thither devotees resort to worship at the sacred steps of Pra Ku-ku-son, Pra Kon-na-kon, Pra Putha-kat-sop, and Pra Samutta Kodom; Siamese names of the four Buddhas, corresponding to the Birman Kaukason, Gonasom, Kasyapa, and Gautama; and to the Ceylonese Kakusanda, Konagom, Kasyapa, and Gautama." The Laos language, which, there is reason to think, varies but very slightly from the Siamese, is said to abound in books, especially in translations from the Pali.—HAMILTON'S *Gazetteer*, art. *Laos*.

* Some authorities make it later. "In no age," remarks the learned Missionary Milne, "has China been free from idolatry; but it greatly increased after the time of Laou-tsze, A.C. 500, the restorer of the religion of Taou, and especially after the introduction of the superstition of Fuh, A.D. 81. This last dragged in with it from the west, a sacred language—the doctrine of a non-entity—the transmigration of souls—the final absorption of good men into deity—also, a degrading idolatry and superstitions without number. We recognise in this sect, Indian deities, Indian doctrines, an Indian language, and Indian canonicals. It has carried the Chinese nation further off from the fountain of life than it was before."—*First Ten Years of the Protestant Mission to China*, by WILLIAM MILNE. (Malacca, 1820). P. 28.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

Julian years,) that we are tempted to consider it as the real epoch adopted by the Siamese astronomers. On the other hand, M. Remusat, in his learned "Dissertations on the Religion and Antiquities of the Hindoo and Tatar Nations," has given a list of twenty-eight Buddhas, or Buddhic patriarchs, contained in a Japanese manuscript, which terminates with one who is said to have been the last who fixed his abode in Hindostan, and who, retiring to China, died there A.D. 495.* It would seem that the ecclesiastical supremacy of the Chinese sovereign, as lord of the Buddhic world, may be dated from that period. This last Budha, who is said to have assumed the

* This list is given in a paper explanatory of a Hindu map of sixty kingdoms. The name and birth-place of each illustrious *rishi* (saint) is carefully specified, together with the period of his death, in Chinese characters and Japanese letters, precisely answering to the Sanscrit or Pali word. The birth of Sakya-muni is fixed on the eighth day of the fourth moon of the twenty-fourth year of the reign of Tchao-wang, of the dynasty of Tcheou; that is, according to De Guignes, 1029 B.C. He is stated to have lived 79 years, which, added to the 1445 years assigned to his successors, twenty-eight in number, down to Bodhidana, bring us to A.D. 495. "The twenty-seventh patriarch burned himself A.D. 457, and left the secret doctrine to that Bodhidana, of the caste of Kettris, and son of the king of Mawar, in Western India, who changed his name to Bodhi-dharma, and was the twenty-eighth patriarch, and the last who fixed his residence in Hindostan. In fact, he embarked on the sea of the south, went to China, and fixed himself near the celebrated mountain of Soung, in the vicinity of Honan, where he died the fifth of the tenth moon, the nineteenth year *tai-ho* (A.D. 495). I came into this country, he said in dying, to teach the law, and to deliver men from their passions. Every flower produces five petals, which set themselves in fruit. Thus I have fulfilled my destiny. He bequeathed the secret doctrine to a Chinese, who took the mystic name of Tsoui-kho."—REMUSAT, *Melanges Asiatiques*, p. 125. Kœmpfer, in his History of Japan, declares that Buddhism began generally to spread throughout that country, A.D. 518. It had been introduced, however, about A.D. 63.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

name of Bodhi-dharma, is expressly stated to have been of the Khetri or Cshatriya caste, and son of the king of Mawar or Bahar. He took up his residence near the celebrated mountain of Soung, in the vicinity of the city of Ho-nan, and at his death bequeathed his office to a Chinese, who assumed the name of Tsoui-kho (skilful penetration). The first four successors of Bodhi-dharma were honoured with the title of *muni* or *moonee* (philosopher). But in the year 713, having acquired a greater degree of political influence, the Buddhic patriarch was dignified with the titles of great master and spiritual prince of the law. The Mongol princes, following up the system, attached to their throne this representative of Buddha, under the high titles of director of the conscience, chief of spiritual affairs, master of the kingdom (*koue-sse*), master of the emperor (*ti-sse*), and, at length, as the sovereign, immaculate, immortal, divine non-entity, the Grand Lama.*

The removal of the visible head of the Buddhic faith from the banks of the Ganges to China, and the establishment of the ecclesiastical supremacy of the Chinese monarch, are certainly circumstances of sufficient importance to present a probable explanation of a new era. Bodhi-dharma died, however, we have seen, about 140 years before the Birman or Siamese era.

* "It is a general belief in Tibet, that the arts and sciences had their origin in the holy city of Benares, which the inhabitants have been taught to esteem as the source both of learning and religion. Their alphabet and character they acknowledge to be derived from the Sanscrit. According to tradition, the ancient teachers of the faith professed by the inhabitants of Tibet, proceeded from Benares. There are two sects of priests, distinguished by their dress; the red or the yellow cap. The latter is reckoned the most orthodox, and has, among his votaries, the emperor of China."—HAMILTON'S *Gaz.*, art. *Tibet*.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

That era, therefore, if connected with these events, must have been determined by some subsequent political or ecclesiastical change in one of the two countries. However this may have been, the supremacy of the Chinese Boa (Ou-dee-Boa) or emperor, over the Indo-Chinese kingdoms, territories too distant to have been retained by the mere tie of conquest, appears to have been universally acknowledged, till Minderajeepraw, after the conquest of Arracan, first ventured to assert his equal dignity and independence by assuming the title of Boa of Birmah.

Thus, then, we seem to have a variety of concurring evidence to prove that Buddhism had its origin in India, where it was identified with a dynasty of monarchs, and with a race whose vernacular dialect has become the sacred language as well of Ceylon as of all the other Indo-Chinese nations. The origin of the Birmans and Arracanese, as well perhaps of the Singhalese, as a people, seems clearly referrible to emigrations of the Khetri caste from Magadha. The aboriginal population of Birmah was doubtless Tâtar, and consisted of rude tribes similar to the Karayns. The Birmans themselves had probably well nigh lost all remembrance of their sacred institutes, having become a mixed people, when a learned brahman was sent to Ceylon to copy the sacred writings. In that island, the Buddhic religion appears to have been preserved in its greatest purity, probably as having been the asylum of the fugitive priesthood; and from thence it was communicated to Japan and China. In the mean time, it appears to have spread northward over Bootan and Tibet, and the shadowy representative of the Buddhic sovereigns found refuge in China, whose monarch claims to be considered as the khalif of Buddhism. The emigrations of Chinese fugitives, conse-

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

quent on the Tatar conquests, may account for the superior information and polish ascribed to the people of Laos. Nor is there any violence in supposing that Buddhism, which had travelled from Magadha to Ceylon, and from Ceylon to China, found its way through Laos, by means of Chinese fugitives or colonists, to Siam and Pegu, and thus met, as it were, with the Buddhism already imported into Birmah, both from Ceylon and from Bengal.*

There are several highly-interesting inquiries connected with the history of Buddhism and its introduction into these regions, to which we have not ventured to advert. Whether the religious creed which it displaced was of a purer kind, as in China, or only a grosser idolatry,—and whether Buddhism itself be not a corruption of a purer faith,—are questions not of very easy solution. How far any of the tenets or institutions of the Indo-Chinese nations may be thought to exhibit traces of a Christian origin, is also a curious inquiry. When it is recollected, that a Nestorian mission was introduced into Ceylon in the fifth or sixth century, it is certainly possible that the striking coincidences observable in many parts of the

* "The Birmans of Ava acknowledge the superior antiquity of the Cingalese, and the reception of their laws and religion from that quarter. The king of Ava has, *within the last thirty years*, at separate times, sent two messengers, persons of learning and respectability, to Ceylon, to procure the original books on which their tenets are founded. In one instance, the Birman minister made official application to the governor-general of India, to protect and assist the person charged with the commission."—HAMILTON'S *Gazetteer*, art. Ceylon. On the other hand, we are told, that "the Birmans entertain the highest reverence for Magadha. A deputation from his majesty of Ava visited the sacred places in that vicinity a few years ago."—FINLAYSON'S *Siam*, p. 252, *note* (by Sir S. Raffles).

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

Buddhic system are not purely accidental.* The zarado who furnished the account, already referred to, of the religion of Birmah, mentions six impostors, teachers of false doctrine, who had appeared prior to the coming of Guadma. "The second of these pretenders taught," he says, "that after death, men are by no means changed into animals, and that animals, on being slain, are not changed into men; but that after death, men are always born men, and animals born animals." "This," remarks Dr. Buchanan, "was probably the doctrine adopted by the Birmans before they embraced the religion of Buddha, for it is yet retained by the Pegu and Birman Carayns."† According to Mr. Judson, it is not more than about eight hundred years ago, that the religion of Boodha was first publicly recognised as the religion of this country.‡

The resemblances between some of the rites and regulations of the Romish Church and the monastic institutions of the Birman religion, are so striking as to suggest the idea that one must have been copied from the other, or both from a common model. Indeed, Father Boori, a Portuguese missionary who visited Cochin China in the sixteenth century, pro-

* The Cingalese annals record that, in the fourth century, the throne of that island was usurped by two Malabar missionaries, who administered the government for upwards of twenty years, and were at length slain by a member of the royal family.—HARVARD, p. lxii.

† Asiat. Research. vol. vi. p. 267.

‡ "Here, about eight hundred years ago, Ah-rah-han, the first Boodhist apostle of Birmah, under the patronage of king Anan-ratha-men-zan, disseminated the doctrines of atheism, and taught his disciples to pant after annihilation as the supreme good."—JUDSON, p. 224.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

tests in despair, in his narrative, " that there is not a dress, office, or ceremony in the Church of Rome, to which the devil has not here provided some counterpart. Even when he began inveighing against the idols, he was answered, that these were the images of departed great men, whom they worshipped exactly on the same principle and in the same manner as the Catholics did the images of the apostles and martyrs."*

The following additional particulars respecting the ecclesiastical system of the Birmans, are taken chiefly from Dr. Buchanan's valuable papers in the Asiatic Researches.

The priests of Guadma, or rahaans, are all regulars, members of some *kioum* (monastery), and under the direction of a superior, in a manner strikingly resembling the monastic orders of the Romish Church. They are under vows of celibacy, and live together in their convents or colleges, which are by much the best habitations in the country. Every kioum has a head called *sara*, which may be interpreted " reader," but it may also be translated abbot. In a particular manner is respected the *sarado* (or seredaw), or royal abbot, who may be likened to the king's confessor. His apartments are very superb, and his attendants very numerous. Next to the emperor, he is the person to whom the greatest external homage is paid, and he is permitted to sleep under a *piasath*, a dignity not enjoyed even by the king's eldest son, who already possesses one half of the imperial power. But although these zaras possess grades of rank conformable to the opulence of their kioums, and the power of their patrons, every zara manages his own establish-

* Murray's Hist. of Discoveries in Asia, vol. iii. p. 249.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

ment, without any appeal to a superior, or even to the head zarado.

The respect shewn to the rhahaans by the lay inhabitants is very great. The road on all occasions is yielded to them; they are always addressed as phongi (or *pun-jee*, eminence) and bura (*praw*, lord). They are permitted to use painting and gilding, and even white, the royal colour, common only to their divinity and the monarch. Although thus honoured, they retain the greatest simplicity in their manners, the dress of the high zarado not differing from the multitude prostrate before him. When at Rangoon, he used, like other rhahaans, to perform his rounds bare-footed, and to receive from house to house the rice that was offered as alms. In this, perhaps, there was somewhat more than humility, as the streets were covered with cloth, and the men prostrated themselves at his feet, begging his blessing, while the women were kept out of his way, as unworthy to be in the presence of a man so weaned from the pleasures of sense.

The necessaries for a rhahaan are, a *sabeit* (pitcher), a proper yellow garment, a large fan, serving for an umbrella, a mat and pillow for a bed, a bucket to draw water, a bottle to keep it in, and a drinking cup. The rhahaans are allowed to eat every thing they receive as a present, provided it be ready dressed, for they never kindle a fire, for fear of destroying some insect. On professing, the *phonghi*, or novice, is told, that his first duty consists "in eating that food only which is procured by the labour and motion of the muscles of the feet." What is meant is this: "Every morning, as soon as they can distinguish the veins on their hands, the rhahaans issue from their

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

convents, and spread themselves all over the neighbouring streets and villages: as they pass along, they stop at the different doors, but without saying a word. If the people of the house are disposed to be charitable, or have not already given away all that has been prepared for the purpose, a person, generally the mistress of the house, comes out, puts the ready-dressed provisions into the sabeit, and the rhahaan goes on in silence, without returning thanks. Nor does he ever solicit for any thing, should it not be convenient or agreeable for the family to bestow alms, but, after standing for a few minutes, proceeds on his rounds. So nice are they in this particular, that it is deemed sinful for a rhahaan on such occasions to cough, or make any signal, by which he might be supposed to put the laity in mind of their duty. As they literally take no care for the morrow, the superfluity they daily give away to animals, to the poor, and to needy strangers and travellers. In order that they may be able to supply these demands, as well as to comply with the letter of this law, even when they are in no want of provisions, the rhahaans make their daily rounds. From this regulation it results, that where there are not a sufficiency of inhabitants to support a convent, there are no rhahaans; and thus the finest kioums in old Ava are deserted, and their gilded halls have become the habitations of outlaws and unclean animals."

Among the instructions delivered to the rhahaan on his ordination are the following: "Whoever is admitted into the priesthood, can by no means be permitted to extol himself as a saint, or as a person endowed with any preternatural gifts; such as the gifts called *meipo* or *xian*; nor is it lawful for him to declare himself a hermit, or a person that loves soli-

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

tude. The priest who, prompted by ambition, falsely and impudently pretends to have obtained the extraordinary gifts of *zian* or of *meipo*, or to have arrived at *nieban*, is no longer a priest of the divine order. To what can he be compared? In the same manner as a palm-tree cut through the middle can never be rejoined so as to live; in such manner shall this ambitious priest be unworthy of being esteemed as belonging to the sacred order." *

The priests have no regular service like the mass. "As far as I could learn," Dr. Buchanan says, "they do not officiate at all in the temples. Very few of them were present at any religious ceremonies or processions; nor do any of them appear to take charge of the temples or images. Their time seems to be employed in instructing the youth, in reading, and soliciting alms." † This statement is hardly consistent with the account which represents them as passing a great part of their time reposing in sequestered and umbrageous spots, as if absorbed in contemplation. The Birmans are very fond of processions: scarcely a week passes, Colonel Symes says, in which there is not a religious spectacle of some kind at Rangoon; either a pompous funeral, or rather incineration, or some festival or ceremony. They observe a species of Lent, which is followed by a month of public festivity. In their prayers, they use rosaries; these are made sometimes of amber beads, sometimes of seeds, especially those of the *Canna Indica*, a plant peculiarly sacred to Buddha, and supposed to have sprung from his blood, when, once upon a time, he cut his foot with a stone. They are in pos-

* Asiat. Res. vol. vi. p. 289. Zian and meipo are different degrees of abstraction or absorption.

† Asiat. Res. vol. vi. p. 279.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

session of one very singular privilege. It is a law, that no criminal can be executed within the walls of a city, nor can be put to death should a rhahaan touch him when being led to execution. "This privilege," Dr. Buchanan says, "they often exert; and although they are, no doubt, sometimes bribed thus to save a bad man, yet, I believe, they much oftener interfere to prevent injustice." * Col. Symes was told, that there were formerly nunneries of virgin priestesses, who, like the rhahaans, wore yellow garments, cut off their hair, and devoted themselves to religious duties; but these societies were suppressed many years ago, as being unfavourable to the increase of the population. "At present," adds this gentleman, "there are a few old women, who shave their heads, wear a white dress, follow funerals, and carry water to the convents; and these venerable dames have some portion of respect shewn to them." Whether these Buddhic vestals have the same privileges as the rhahaans, we are not told; but the classic reader will probably be not a little startled at finding these traces of customs so nearly allied to the institutions of Greece and Rome, among the semi-barbarous tribes of eastern Asia. We should err, however, were we to consider all the rites and usages which are now incorporated with the Birman religion, as original or essential and characteristic parts of Buddhism. Like every other form of superstition, it has undergone the modifications introduced by time, and has taken its complexion from national character, blending itself, in different countries, more or less, with creeds and customs ancient and modern, Christian and heathen, — Indian, Tatarian, and Chinese. What its peculiar doctrines may

* Asiat. Res. vol. vi. pp. 276, 297.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

be, is an inquiry more curious than important, except as it relates to the obstacles they may create in the way of the communication and spread of a purer faith. In this point of view, its negative character, as contrasted with the Brahminical superstition, is the most pleasing feature of the system. But whatever be its dogmas, the system, as Mr. Judson remarks, "has no power over the heart, lays no restraint upon the passions. Though it forbids theft and falsehood, and inculcates benevolence, forgiveness of injuries, and love of enemies, it is destitute of power to repress the one, or to produce the other." In short, it has the beauty and symmetry of an image, but there is no life in it.

We have, perhaps, too long detained the reader with a disquisition not strictly within the province of the Traveller, but which we have thought adapted to throw some light on the present condition of the Indo-Chinese countries. In proceeding to avail ourselves of the very scanty materials which exist for illustrating the topography of this country, our chief guide will be Colonel Symes, who visited Ava as envoy from the governor-general of India in the year 1795,* together with the Journal of Captain Hiram Cox, who was selected as the company's first resident at Rangoon, and who visited Amerapoora in 1797; besides which, the works of older travellers, the journals of the American missionaries, and the tracts and communications scattered through different periodical works, are the only accessible sources of information.

* Dr. Buchanan, whose contributions to the Asiatic Researches have been so repeatedly referred to, accompanied the embassy as surgeon.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

RANGOON.

THE river of Rangoon is to the Irrawaddy, what the Hoogly is to the Ganges: it forms the grand entrance to the Birman empire. The general appearance of the river and its banks resembles that of the Calcutta river; the navigation, however, is much more commodious. The land on each side is low and swampy, and the banks are skirted with high weeds and brushwood; but the channel is bold and deep. Before a vessel is quite land-locked, Dagon pagoda, with its gilt spire and *tze*, is seen towering above the trees; and, a little beyond, Syriam pagoda, which is of similar shape, but less lofty. Syriam, where the first British factory was established, lies up a branch of the river that comes from the N.N.E.; it stands in lat. 16° 49′ N., long. 96° 17′ E. The Rangoon branch, called also the Panlang, comes from the N.W. The town is situated on a tongue of land about a mile and a half above its confluence with the Syriam river, in lat. 16° 47′ N., long. 96° 9′ E.* The river, thus far, is perfectly commodious for shipping; it is about 600 yards wide at Rangoon; the water in general deep from shore to shore, the bottom good, and the current moderate. The spring tides rise twenty feet. The banks are soft, and so flat, that there is need of little labour for the formation of docks, although they can receive ships of 8 and 900 tons.

The town, as seen from the river, has a rude appearance, being composed of straggling huts of *cadjan* (palm-leaf) and bamboo, raised on piles close to the

* Where not otherwise mentioned, the longitude and latitude are given on the authorities of Symes, Buchanan, and Hamilton's East India Gazetteer.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

water's edge, slips for building ships, and mud docks. Some few tiled houses are seen among the trees within the stockade, and the roof of the custom-house is raised two stories in the Chinese style. Part of the timber stockade, which encloses what is called the fort, is seen towards the river; and near the flag-staff is a very good wooden pier, with a crane and steps for landing goods. Here, also, is placed the saluting battery of sixteen old iron guns, four or six-pounders, which are run out through port-holes, in a wooden breast-work like a ship's side. Many small pagodas, some of them with gilt spires, are seen amid the trees on both sides of the river. The buildings along shore on the town side, extend about one mile and a half, and on the opposite one, about a quarter of a mile.

The city forms a square, surrounded with a high stockade; and on the north side it is further strengthened by a fosse, across which is thrown a wooden bridge: on this side, there are two gates; in each of the others, only one. Wooden stages are erected in several places within the stockade, for musketeers to stand on in case of attack. The number of cannon, and the quantity of spoil of every description captured here in 1825, prove the efforts made to strengthen the place, and to maintain its possession against an enemy, to have exceeded greatly the estimate made of its state by Col. Symes. Close to the principal wharf are (or were, for we are describing Rangoon as it was,) two commodious wooden houses, used by the merchants as an exchange. The streets are narrow, much inferior, Col. Symes says, to those of Pegu, but clean and well paved. There are numerous channels to carry off the rain, over which strong planks are laid to prevent any interruption of intercourse. The houses are raised on posts; the smaller are supported

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

by bamboos, the larger ones by strong timbers. The officers of government, the most opulent merchants, and all persons of consideration, live within the fort: shipwrights, and people of inferior rank, inhabit the suburbs, where one entire street, called Tackally, is exclusively assigned to women of a class who too generally abound in all sea-ports, and who are not permitted to dwell within the precincts of the fortification. The minute and interesting Journal of Mr. Judson, the American missionary, who resided nearly twelve years at Rangoon, describes the society there to be in a very insecure and disorganised state, robberies occurring nightly, and murders being very frequent. This state of things renders the outskirts of the town a very unsafe residence for any persons who might be deemed opulent; but these marauders do not wantonly molest the lower classes. Rangoon, in fact, partakes of the vicious character of most sea-ports, which, attracting all descriptions of persons for the purposes of trade, are generally found to exhibit a state of manners and public character far below the average standard of morals in the interior.

The population of Rangoon is considerable. In 1796, there were 5000 taxable houses in the city and suburbs. Since then, it has enjoyed a flourishing trade, and efforts had evidently been made to increase the strength of the place. Before the war, it may be presumed to have contained at least 30,000 inhabitants. In January 1810, the town was almost totally consumed by fire; and again, in March 1823, a most destructive conflagration was witnessed by the missionaries resident there. "We beheld," says Mr. Judson, "several houses in flames, in a range which led directly to the city; and, as we saw no exertion to extinguish it, we concluded the whole place would be

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

destroyed. We set off immediately for our house in town, that we might remove our furniture and things that were there; but when we came to the town gate, it was shut. The poor people, in their fright, had shut the gate, ignorantly imagining that they could shut the fire out, though the walls and gates were made entirely of wood. After waiting, however, for some time, the gate was opened, and we removed in safety all our things into the mission-house, some distance in the suburbs. The fire continued to rage all day, and swept away almost all the houses, with the walls, gates, &c." In a country of forests, however, a wooden town is soon rebuilt. The fire, occurring in open day, did not occasion any loss of lives; and the structures, light and slender as they are, were soon restored. Such is the character of all conflagrations in the cities of the East, that the same detail equally suits Delhi, Constantinople, Pekin, or Rangoon. Fatalists by creed, indolent by habit, careless and improvident from the influence of a grinding despotism, the inhabitants view the devastation of public property with a callous and supine indifference.

Having long been the asylum of insolvent debtors from the different settlements of India, Rangoon is crowded, Col. Symes observes, with foreigners of desperate fortune. "Here are to be found fugitives from all countries of the East, and of all complexions. Their common place of meeting exhibits a motley assemblage of merchants, such as few towns of much greater magnitude can boast of: Malabars, Moguls, Persians, Parsees, Armenians, Portuguese, French, and English, all mingle here, and are engaged in various branches of commerce. They not only receive the protection of the government, but enjoy the most liberal toleration in matters of religion; they celebrate their several

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

rites and festivals, totally disregarded by the Birmans, who have no inclination to make proselytes. The Birmans never trouble themselves about the religious opinion of any sect, nor disturb their ritual ceremonies, provided they do not break the peace, or intermeddle with their own divinity Guadma."

Nature has bestowed on Rangoon every facility and advantage calculated to render it a flourishing and highly important commercial place; and from its position, in skilful hands, it would soon attract the richest commerce of these highly-gifted regions, and become an entrepôt for India.

The imports from the British settlements consist chiefly of coarse piece goods, glass, hardware, and broad cloth; the returns are almost wholly in the teak timber. A considerable traffic also is carried on by boats, which are fitted out annually as well from Rangoon, as from various ports on the great river Irrawaddy, and which proceed by way of the Bassien river, through the channels which divide Cape Negrais from the Continent, to Luckipore and the Dacca provinces, and through the whole course of the Brahmapootra. These boats carry in general from 1000 to 1,500 *mounds* (of 80 lbs. each), with a crew of from twenty to twenty-five men. Each boat is supposed to contain, on an average, the value of 4000 rupees, the greater part in bullion: the remainder consists of sheathing boards, sticks of copper from China, stick lac, cutch, ivory, and wax. The indirect trade of China through Arracan, as well as from Rangoon, has of late years experienced an increase. In fact, from its geographical position, the commerce of Rangoon must become very productive and important.

The facilities of the harbour being so great, and the teak forests of Henzawuddy almost inexhaustible,

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

ship-building forms an important and principal part of the occupation of the natives. Vessels of 900 and 1000 tons burthen are built here at a considerably less cost than at any other part of India. In 1800, the cost of ship-building at Rangoon was 13*l.* per ton, coppered and equipped in the European style: the French models are those used. It is asserted, that ships can be built here for one third less than they cost at Calcutta, and for nearly half what they cost at Bombay.

Speaking of their method of ship-building, Col. Symes observes: "While we admired the structure and materials of their ships, we could not overlook the mode in which the work was executed, and the obvious merit of the artificers. In Bengal, a native carpenter, though his business is commonly well done, yet, in his manner of performing it, excites the surprise and ridicule of Europeans. He cuts his wood with a diminutive adze, in a feeble and slow manner; and when he wants to turn a piece of timber, has recourse to a labourer that attends him. Numbers there compensate for the want of individual energy: notwithstanding this, they finish what they undertake in a masterly manner. The Birman shipwrights are athletic men, and possess in an eminent degree that vigour which distinguishes Europeans, and gives them pre-eminence over the enervated inhabitants of the East; nor, I imagine, are the inhabitants of any country capable of greater exertions than the Birmans."

The convents in the neighbourhood of Rangoon are numerous. Colonel Symes was told, that they exceeded 1,300. From the high importance of the Shoe-dagun Pagoda, it follows that the *zarado*, or head of the rhahaans at Rangoon, receives the highest veneration. He lives in a very handsome monastery half a

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

mile from the town, on the way to the temple. Nothing can more strikingly exemplify the tolerant character of Buddism, than that its chief priest, who would not have gone out of his way, or stopped, had a monarch accosted him, on being joined by Col. Symes, entered freely into conversation with him, and not only suffered him to bear him company in his walk homeward, but invited him to enter and rest himself. The apartment consisted of a large, lofty hall, with mats spread on the floor, in the centre of which they seated themselves; several young rhahaans who had attended him in his walk, ranging themselves at a little distance. The conversation, as led by the *xarado*, referred solely to his rank as head of the church at Rangoon, and to the sacerdotal titles conferred on him by the Birman sovereigns. He is described as a diminutive old man, seventy-five years of age, but he still walked with a firm step. He wore the usual yellow dress of the rhahaans, and both his head and feet were bare. He maintained a perfectly abstracted appearance, rivetting his eyes on the ground before him, even when engaged in conversation; but he would seem not to have been wholly dead to the vanities of this world, whatever self-denial he might practice as to its gratifications.

About two miles and a half N.N.W. of Rangoon stands the stately pagoda of Shoe-dagun, or the Golden Dagun. This grand building, although not so high by twenty-five or thirty feet as that of the Shoe-madoo at Pegu, is much more highly ornamented. The terrace on which it stands, is raised on a rocky eminence, considerably higher than the circumjacent country, and is reached by above 100 stone steps, that have been suffered to fall into decay. The situation renders Shoe-dagun a conspicuous object at a distance of many

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

miles. The *tee*, or umbrella of open iron-work, and the whole of the spire, are richly gilded, and, when the sun shines, exhibit a singularly splendid appearance. The placing of the tee is an act of high importance and solemnity; it is, in effect, the sanctification of the temple, signifying that then, and not until then, the divinity takes possession of it. The borders of the terrace on which the temple is raised, are planted with trees in regular rows. From this eminence, there is a beautiful and extensive prospect; the Pegu and Rangoon rivers are seen winding through a level, woody country, and the temple of Syriam, little inferior to that of Dagun, stands near the junction of the streams. The road leading from the city to the temple is formed with care. A wide causeway in the centre prevents the rain from lodging, and throws it off to the sides. The road is made of bricks, and appears to be constructed in a way peculiar to this country. The bricks are about one inch and three-quarters thick, and are placed on the edges by sixes laid transversely. Judging from the length of time which has elapsed since the road was laid down, this method has all the recommendation of durability, it being very little cut up by the clumsy carriages drawn by bullocks passing over it. Numberless little spires are ranged along the edge of the road, in which are niches to receive small images of their divinity Guadma or Dag-un. Several kioums or monasteries lie in this direction, generally removed a small distance from the public way, under the shade of pipal or tamarind trees.

The golden temple containing the idol, may challenge competition in point of beauty with any other of its class in India. The building is composed entirely of teak wood, and indefatigable pains are displayed in

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

the profusion of rich carved work which adorns it. The whole is one mass of the richest gilding, with the exception of the three roofs, which have a silvery appearance. A plank of a deep red colour separates the gold and silver, which has a happy effect in relieving them. The ornaments represent the head of the peacock. All round the principal pagoda are smaller temples richly gilded, and furnished with images of Guadma, whose unmeaning smile meets you in every direction, the sight of which, accompanied by the constant tinkling of the innumerable bells hung on the top or tee of each pagoda,* combines with the stillness and deserted appearance of the place, to produce an impression on the mind not speedily to be effaced.

The deity now worshipped in the temple of Shoe-dagun, is unquestionably Buddha; but how comes he to have usurped here the name and honours of the monstrous deity who

> "had his temple high
> Reared in Azotus, dreaded through the coast
> Of Palestine, in Gath, and Ascalon,
> And Accaron, and Gaza's frontier bounds?"

The word Dag-un or Dagoung is composed of the word *dag*, fish, and the mysterious and sacred monosyllable *om*, *on*, *aum*, or *aun*, a title bestowed upon the sun, but which appears, under its various forms, to imply divine existence.† Dagon, therefore, is the Fish-God,

* Each bell has a fan suspended to its tongue, to catch the passing breeze.

† Dagon, according to Sanchoniathon, was Osiris in the shape of a fish, *Deus Cetus*. Said-on is the same deity, both *dag* and *said* signifying fish, whence the names of Sidon and Beth-saida; so, Beth-dagon, Josh. xv. 41, and xix. 27; places so named, in all probability, from the idol worshipped there. Derketos or Atargatis (from Κητος) is the same deity. Under this allegorical represen-

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

the amphibious deity who was the chief object of Phenician idolatry. Under this form, Vishnou himself is represented in the *matsyŭ* avatar, as a man issuing from a fish. According to the testimony of Mr. Hamelton, the idol originally enshrined here was not of a human form; but he was not allowed to see it. There can, however, be little doubt that the place has taken its name from the deity to whom it was consecrated, and who was worshipped here, ages before the era of Buddha, either by the Tallien nation or by a foreign colony; and that the Indian Gaudama has inherited the honours of the Syrian Dagon, just as the Virgin has succeeded in western countries to the shrines and altars of the Mater Dea, and the temple of Vesta has become the church of the Madonna of the Sun. Here, the mariner who has been delivered from peril, now presents as his votive offering, a model of a ship or boat to Buddha, as his ancestors once did to their amphibious patron, and as in many countries is practised by the worshippers of the Virgin as Our Lady of Deliverance. In like manner, the temple of Shoe-madoo (Maha Deo) at Syriam was once, no doubt, sacred to the Hindoo Apollo, Sooryŭ or Sirius; and Sitong may perhaps be nothing else than Saidon (or Σιτων), the Phenician Dagon under another name.*

Mr. Judson, the American missionary, was present, in 1817, at the grand annual festival held at Rangoon in honour of Gaudama. It lasts for three days. "It

tation, it is plausibly supposed that Noah is referred to.—See BRYANT'S *Mythology*, vol. iii. p. 134; iv. 140; v. 236. CALMET'S *Dictionary, by* TAYLOR, art. *Dagon;* and *Fragments*, cxlv. ccxii. ccxiv.

* If the Philistines or Palestines were, as has been contended, a branch of the Palli or Indo-Scythians, it would cease to be remarkable, that the same object of worship should be introduced by a maritime people into their different colonies.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

is observed," he says, "all over the country, but I presume the multitude collected in this place is much greater than at any other, excepting Ava. Priests and people come in boats from a great distance, to worship at the pagoda in this place, which is supposed to contain a relic of Guadama. The viceroy, on these days, goes out in all the pomp and splendour possible, dressed and ornamented with all his insignia of office, attended by the members of government, and the common people. After kneeling and worshipping at the pagoda, they generally spend the day in amusements, such as boxing, dancing, singing, theatrical exhibitions, and fire-works. Most of the older people spend the night at the pagoda, and listen to the instructions of the priests.

"Great and expensive offerings are made at this season. One last year, presented by a member of government, cost 3000 tecals, or 1,200 dollars. It was a kind of portable pagoda, made of bamboo and paper, richly ornamented with gold leaf and paintings. It was a hundred feet in height, and the circumference of its base about fifty. Half way up its height was a man ludicrously dressed, with a mask on his face, white wings on his shoulders, and artificial finger-nails, two inches in length, in the posture of dancing. This offering was carried by sixty men, preceded by a band of music, and followed by the officer who made it, and his suite. Other offerings presented at this festival are, various kinds of artificial trees, the branches and twigs of which are filled with cups, bowls, handkerchiefs, and garments of all descriptions: these are given to the slaves attached to the pagoda, who, the week following, have something like a fair to dispose of their offerings.

"The pagoda to which such multitudes resort, is

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

one of the largest and most splendid in the empire. To give an accurate description of this noble edifice, requires an abler pen than mine; and perhaps a better one of its construction and dimensions cannot be given, than that which has already been presented to the public by Col. Symes, of a similar pagoda at Pegu. The beauty and variety of its appendages, however, are far superior. After having ascended the flight of steps, a large gate opens, when a wild, fairy seene is abruptly presented to view. The ground is completely covered with a variety of ludicrous objects, which meet the eye in every direction, interspersed with the banyan, cocoa-nut, and toddy trees. Here and there are large open buildings, containing huge images of Guadama, some in a sitting, some in a sleeping position, surrounded by images of priests and attendants, in the act of worship, or listening to his instructions. Before the image of Guadama are erected small altars, on which offerings of fruit, flowers, &c. are laid. Large images of elephants, lions, angels, and demons, together with a number of indescribable objects, assist in filling the picturesque scene."

It was in the year 1813, that this estimable missionary and his wife, bidding farewell to the comforts of civilised life and the privileges of Christian society, took up their residence at Rangoon, with the resolution of devoting themselves to the study of the language, for the purpose of being qualified to translate the Holy Scriptures and other religious works into Birman. There were at the time no English families in the town, nor a female in all Birmah with whom Mrs. Judson could converse. The difficulties to be overcome were appalling, and their situation was alike cheerless and defenceless, surrounded by despotism, avarice, and cruelty, and the palpable darkness of

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

heathenism. Several missionaries had previously made attempts to reside there, but had been discouraged, and had abandoned the enterprise. Too warm praise cannot be bestowed on the signal patience, constancy, and cheerfulness with which, year after year, they continued to prosecute their silent labours, conciliating by their manners the esteem of the natives, but without attempting any direct attack on their prejudices. That they should have remained so long in this unprotected situation, without suffering either depredation or insult, must be admitted, however, to be greatly to the credit of the people, and a proof of their mild and tolerant character.

A few detached extracts from Mrs. Judson's Journal will supply some interesting illustrations of the manners and customs of the inhabitants of Rangoon.

1813. "Our home is in the mission-house built by the English Baptist Society, on the first arrival of Messrs. Chater and Carey* in this country. It is large and convenient, situated in a rural place, about half a mile from the walls of the town.† We have gardens enclosed, containing about two acres of ground, full of fruit-trees of various kinds. In the dry season, our situation is very agreeable. We often enjoy a pleasant walk within our own enclosure, or in some of the adjoining villages.

"As it respects our food, we are much better circumstanced than we expected. We have no bread, butter, cheese, potatoes, or scarcely any thing to which

* The son of the venerable Dr. Carey, of Serampore. Mr. Carey married a Birman lady of European extraction, who, together with their two children, was drowned in ascending the Irrawaddy, through the upsetting of the boat. Mr. Carey narrowly escaped.

† They subsequently found it advisable to remove to a house in the town.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

we have been accustomed. Our principal food is rice and curried fowl, and fowls stewed with cucumbers. The country presents a rich and beautiful appearance, every where covered with vegetation, and, if cultivated, would be one of the finest in the world. But the poor natives have little inducement to labour, or to accumulate property, as it would probably be taken from them by their oppressive rulers. Many of them live on leaves and vegetables which grow spontaneously, and some actually die of hunger. At the present time there is quite a famine. Every article of provision is extremely high; many, therefore, are induced to steal whatever comes in their way. There are robberies and murders committed frequently. Scarcely a night passes but houses are broken open, and things stolen; but our trust and confidence are in our Heavenly Father, who can easily preserve and protect us."

1814. "Dec. 11. To-day, for the first time, I have visited the wife of the viceroy. I was introduced to her by a French lady, who has frequently visited her. When we first arrived at the government-house, she was not up; consequently we had to wait some time. But the inferior wives of the viceroy diverted us much by their curiosity in minutely examining every thing we had on, and by trying on our gloves, bonnets, &c. At last, her highness made her appearance, richly dressed in the Birman fashion, with a long silver pipe in her mouth, smoking. At her appearance, all the other wives took their seats at a respectful distance, and sat in a crouching posture without speaking. She received me very politely, took me by the hand, seated me upon a mat, and herself by me. She *excused* herself for not coming in sooner, on the ground of indisposition. One of her women brought her a

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

bunch of flowers, of which she took several, and ornamented my cap. She was very inquisitive whether I had a husband and children, whether I was my husband's first or principal wife, supposing that Mr. Judson had several wives. When the viceroy came in, I really trembled, for I had never before beheld such a savage-looking creature. His long robe and enormous spear not a little increased my dread. He spoke to me, however, very condescendingly, and asked if I would take some rum or wine. When I arose to go, her highness again took my hand, told me she was happy to see me, and that I must come to see her every day. She led me to the door; I made my *salaam*, and departed."

1815. Sept. "A new viceroy has lately arrived, who is much respected and beloved by the people. He visited us soon after his arrival, and told us that we must come to the government-house very often. After he had moved into his new house, he gave an invitation to all the English and Frenchmen to dinner. The viceroy and his wife did every thing in their power to amuse the company. Among other things were music and dancing. The wife of the viceroy asked me if I knew how to dance in the English way? I told her, that it was not proper for the wives of priests to dance. She immediately assented, deeming that a sufficient reason for my declining."

In the spring of 1816, Mr. and Mrs. Judson were bereaved of the solace of their hearts, in their first-born and only son. "A few days after the death of our little boy," says Mrs. Judson, "the viceroy's wife visited us with a numerous retinue. She really appeared to sympathise with us in our affliction, and requested Mr. Judson not to let it too much affect his

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

health, which was already very feeble. Some time after her visit, she invited us to go out into the country with her for the benefit of our health, and that our minds, as she expressed it, *might become cool.* We consented, and she sent an elephant with a howdah upon it, for our conveyance. We went three or four miles through the woods. Sometimes, the small trees were so close together, that our way was impassable but by the elephant's breaking them down, which he did with the greatest ease, at the word of the driver. The scene was truly interesting. Picture thirty men armed with spears and guns, and with red caps on their heads, which partly covered their shoulders; then, a huge elephant, caparisoned with a gilt howdah, containing a tall, genteel female, richly dressed in red and white silk. We had the honour of riding next to the viceroy's lady; after us, on three or four elephants, came her son and some of the members of government. Two or three hundred followers, male and female, concluded the procession. Our ride terminated in the centre of a beautiful garden of the viceroy's. I say beautiful, because it was entirely the work of nature: art had no hand in it. It was full of a variety of fruit-trees, growing wild and luxuriant: the noble banyan formed a delightful shade, under which our mats were spread, and we seated ourselves to enjoy the scenery around us. Nothing could exceed the endeavours of the vice-reine to render our excursion agreeable. She gathered fruit and pared it, culled flowers and knotted them, and presented them with her own hands. At dinner, she had her cloth spread by ours, nor did she refuse to partake of whatever we presented her. We returned in the evening, fatigued with riding on the elephant, de-

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

lighted with the country and the hospitality of the Birmans, and dejected at their ignorance of the true God."

Speaking again of this interesting person, the wife of the viceroy, Mrs. Judson says: "I had an opportunity of trying the sincerity of her friendship at the time we procured our order for going to Bengal.* I went to her with a petition, and, contrary to Birman custom, appeared without a present. She was in an inner room, with the viceroy, when I presented the petition, and after hearing it read, she said it should be granted. She called her secretary, and directed him to write an official order, have it regularly passed through all the offices, and impressed with the royal stamp. I was determined not to leave her until I received the order, as it would be very difficult to obtain it unless delivered in her presence." As Mrs. Judson had foreseen, the official persons wished to evade its being executed, and urged her to return home, promising that it should be brought her. The viceroy's wife asked her if that would answer her purpose. "Being perfectly acquainted with the object of the man," says Mrs. J., "I replied, that I had had much anxiety on account of this order, and if it was her pleasure, I preferred waiting for it. She said it should be as I wished, and ordered the man to expedite the business." Mrs. Judson was permitted to remain in her apartment until towards the evening, when the order was brought in and delivered.

An order had arrived from court, some time after this, for the banishment from the country of all the Portuguese priests. There were but three then resi-

* The state of Mr. Judson's health had rendered a change of climate necessary; but, without an order from the viceroy, no female can leave the country.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

dent at Rangoon; but to ascertain exactly this point, the viceroy had directed that all foreign priests should appear at the court-house; and this edict had afforded the inferior officers the means of summoning and harassing the members of the mission, who were led to expect their own banishment. At length, a summons, on a Sunday morning, incited Mrs. Judson to attend with the Rev. Mr. Hough, who had joined the American missionaries, and to present a petition stating the grievance. As soon as she caught the viceroy's eye, he, in a very condescending manner, called her to come in and make known her request. On hearing the petition, the viceroy reproved the offender in the most austere manner; at the same time giving a written order that Mr. Hough should not be called on "his sacred day," and that he should be molested no more.

1819. April. "This evening I went, for the second time, to hear a popular Birman preacher. On our arrival, we found a *zayat** in the precincts of one of the most celebrated pagodas, lighted up, and the floor spread with mats. In the centre was a frame raised about eighteen inches from the ground, where the preacher, on his arrival, seated himself. He appeared to be about forty-five years of age, of very

* The *zayat* is raised four feet from the ground, and divided into three parts. The first division is laid entirely open to the road, without doors, windows, or a partition in the front side; it takes up a third part of the building. Their size is of course regulated by the probability of the resort of hearers. They are made of bamboo and thatch. The building erected on the road to the Dag-un pagoda by Mr. Judson, to attract the passers-by, (an experiment highly hazardous,) was twenty-seven feet by eighteen. It must be considered as a very decisive proof of the mild administration of the Birman government, that this bold step was persevered in by Mr. Judson for some time, and he had made very considerable progress without any personal injury or danger.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

pleasing countenance and harmonious speech. He was once a priest, but is now a layman. The people, as they came in, seated themselves on the mats; the men on one side of the house, and the women on the other. The congregation was small, not exceeding a hundred persons. The people being convened, one appointed for the purpose called three times for silence and attention. Each person then took the leaves and flowers which had been previously distributed, and placing them between his fingers, (as rosaries,) raised them to his head, and in that respectful posture remained motionless until the service was closed. When all things were properly adjusted, the preacher closed his eyes, and commenced repeating a portion from the Birman sacred writings. His subject was the conversion of the two prime disciples of Guadama, and their subsequent promotion and glory. His oratory I found to be entirely different from all that we call oratory. At first, he seemed dull and monotonous; but presently his soft, mellifluous tones won their way into the heart, and lulled the soul into that state of calmness and serenity, which, to a Birman mind, somewhat resembles the boasted perfection of their saints of old. His discourse continued about half an hour; and at the close, the whole assembly burst out into a short prayer, after which, all rose and retired. This man exhibits twice every evening in different places."

As far as regards acuteness, the Birman teachers would seem to be no mean proficients in the art of reasoning, and fit to rank as scholars even of the Athenian sophists. Moung-hong, "a disciple of the great Toungdwen teacher, the acknowledged head of the semi-atheists," is described as a complete sceptic, scarcely believing his own existence, and always quarrelling on

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

some speculative point with his wife, who is pronounced by Mrs. Judson to be the most superior woman, in point of intellect, that she met with in Birmah. "If she says, the rice is ready, he will reply, Rice! what is rice? Is it matter, or spirit? Is it an idea, or is it non-entity? Perhaps she will say, It is matter. He will reply, Well, wife, and what is matter? Are you sure there is such a thing in existence, or are you merely subject to a delusion of the senses?" Yet, in manners, our philosopher was all suavity, humility, and respect. His wife, "as sharp as himself," harassed Mrs. Judson with all sorts of questions relative to the possibility of sin's finding entrance into a pure mind, or of its being permitted under the government of a holy sovereign. In their habits and mode of thought and reasoning, the Birmans are influenced by a high conceit of their own powers, and a fancied superiority, fenced by strong prejudices. This was most apparent in the very interesting conversations held with Oo-yan, a man of talents and respectability. On doctrinal points, he discovered a most acute, discriminating mind; and his reasoning was both insinuating and adroit. Candour, too was strikingly evinced by some of the disputants. And numbers, it appears, "indeed, all the semi-atheists," who seem to be Buddhists *par excellence*, are despisers of Guadama and the established religion of Birmah. While the rhahaans, however, affect to make no proselytes, both they and the government are strictly jealous to detect, and relentless to punish any individual Birmans who shall depart from the faith of Guadama. They are slaves of the emperor, and it is viewed as a mark of treason to dissent in this respect from his will. Thus, when the keen reasoners and disputants among their doctors could not gainsay the

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

zeal, talents, and Christian doctrine of Mr. Judson, and applied to the liberal-minded Maywoon Mya-day-mien to interfere and send him away, asserting that, by means of Moung-shway-gnong, a convert, every endeavour was making "to turn the priests' rice-pot bottom upward," he calmly replied, "What consequence? Let the priests turn it back again." But when proofs were alleged that he had become a Christian convert, the viceroy replied, "Then he is worthy of death." The mere rumour that the words "Inquire further" had proceeded from the lips of the viceroy, sufficed to occasion the desertion of the zayat, which was consequently shut up in 1819; and Mr. Judson determined on the bold measure of proceeding to the capital, to present a memorial to the young monarch. An account of his interview with the lord of all elephants will be given under our description of the capital. It was unsuccessful; yet, up to the close of the Journal in December 1823, Mr. Judson was still allowed to carry on divine worship in private in the mission-house, and to give religious instruction to all who called upon him, while he prosecuted, as his main work, the translation of the New Testament.

We must now prepare to ascend the mighty Irrawaddy; but, before we leave Rangoon, it will be proper to make a few remarks on the general appearance and nature of the surrounding country, and the southern portion of the delta.

The country in the immediate vicinity of Rangoon, far from being flat and swampy, is agreeably diversified with gentle risings and slopes. From the site of an old pagoda on an eminence, Captain Cox obtained a commanding view of the country for many miles round. "The Martaban mountains formed a boundary to the N.E. To the south, and westward of the

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

river, the meanderings of which are seen for many miles, is an extensive plain, cleared for paddy-grounds, and bounded by deep forests. The soil of the valleys is a fine loam, covered with rich luxuriant pastures; the cattle are as large and in as good a condition as are to be seen in any part of India. The soil of the knolls or little hills appeared to be a red loam mixed with sand, on a basis of red rock, that seems to have undergone the action of fire; it is friable and broken on the surface into gravel, and contains, apparently, a large portion of iron. The roads at present are very indifferent, but might very easily be rendered good and fit for carriages. In the vicinity of the town are several orchards and many pleasant situations for building. The air is pure and elastic; and its general salubrity is evinced by the appearance of the inhabitants, who are a hale, robust race."* It has been supposed that the inequalities in the soil are artificial. Nothing, however, Captain Cox states, can be more distant from the truth. Immediately to the northward of the town, a gentle ridge commences, extending from the river two miles and a half, north and south: at its highest point, it is two hundred feet at least above the level of the river at neap tides. In its breadth, it varies from fifty to four hundred yards, shelving away to the westward, and sending off bluff spires to the eastward.† On the apex or northern

* "The climate is good," says Mrs. Judson, "better than any other part of the East."

† The soil of this ridge is, 1st. A thin stratum of vegetable mould, mixed with silicious earth, which latter predominates; this first stratum is of various depths, from twelve feet to a few inches; 2d. Red, ferruginous, porous rock, with its stratum vertical or perpendicular to the horizontal strata of the other classes; 3d. Decomposed red ferruginous rock, mixed with silicious earth, with a large proportion of iron ore, red, yellow, and blue; 4th. Argilla-

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

edge of this ridge, stands the stupendous pagoda of Shoe-dagun; and to the north of it, in a hollow formed by the rains, is a pool of water, limpid, but acid to the taste.* Wherever the blue, ponderous stone (which forms the sixth stratum) has been laid bare by the monsoon torrents, and is exposed to the rays of the sun, a native copperas is formed. The rocks on the surface near the large pool have the appearance of sandstone, in many places skinned over with a thin crust of red, dephlogisticated iron ore; but when exposed to the air, they fall into a yellowish white impalpable powder. On the surface of the mud deposited in those pools which have been dried up by evaporation, a yellow scum appears; and among the rocks and hollows, the presence of sulphur is strongly indicated.

"The general course of the river is to the S.E., but with frequent and deep windings, where the reaches on the river are about 250 yards broad, winding sometimes less than 100 yards, but with depth sufficient for ships. The banks are low, highest on the north-eastern side, and appear well cultivated and interspersed with straggling houses. The spontaneous growth of the banks are cane reeds from six to ten feet high, the tops of which are excellent provender for cattle. The soil from the edge of the river, is an unvaried stratum of rich, sandy loam."

ceous earth, white clay; 5th. Blue, silicious earth, with a large proportion of iron ore and vitriolic acid; and 6th, immediately below it, is a dark blue, ponderous, granular stone, emitting fire on collision with steel, containing a large proportion of iron ore and vitriolic acid.

* From the result of some experiments on the water, Captain Cox was led to conclude that it is a pure chalybeate, containing iron held in solution by either sulphuric or vitriolic acid, with a very small proportion of magnesia and common salt.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

Panlang (by Captain Cox written Pau-layn), the first station above Rangoon, has once been a town of considerable magnitude, and the number of boats generally moored near it, indicate that it is still a place of some importance. Here, the Rangoon river, which is frequently called the Panlang-mioup, separates from the great stream in the same manner as the Hoogley does from the Ganges. The principal branch, which is about 700 yards in width at this junction, pursuing a southerly course, divides, as it approaches the sea, into a number of channels, which are filled by the tide, and are for the most part navigable. The eastern bank is in the viceroyalty of Pegu, but the opposite country is included in the province of Dalla. The great delta of the Irrawaddy, extending from the western mountains of Cape Negrais to Sirian or Syriam, is about 110 geographical miles in length, and is divided into the governments of Negrais, Bassien (or Persaim), Dalla, Rangoon, and Syriam. The district of Dalla extends westward to Mainda, the residence of the governor of the district; a town consisting of one long street, at the east end of which is a creek, which extends all the way to Bassien, and has twelve feet of water at high tide. The city of Dalla, from which the district takes its name, is said to be on the western bank of an arm of the Irrawaddy, called the Chinabucker, and was formerly a place of importance. The jurisdiction is entirely distinct from that of Rangoon, which is vested in the viceroy of Henzawaddy: the Pegu maywoon cannot interfere with a criminal on the Dalla side of the river.

Bassein (properly Persaim) is seated on the river to which it gives name, called also the Negrais river, the westernmost branch of the Irrawaddy, which falls into the Indian Ocean at Cape Negrais. The harbour is

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

commodious, and it is reported that vessels of any size might securely anchor in its stream. The British factory established here in 1757, was destroyed in the wars between the Birmans and Taliens in the days of Alompraw ; and as it has never been restored, Bassien, though occupying so favourable a position, has not, of late years, been visited by Europeans, Rangoon having become the emporium of the empire. It stands in lat. 16° 50′ N., long. 93° E.

The island of Negrais lies off the mouth of the Bassien or Negrais river. Its only importance is derived from the harbour. There is not a single spring of fresh water, nor any habitation on the island. The coast is here a barren desert, covered with an impenetrable jungle. Towards the north, there is a hill crowned with an old pagoda, from which the point of Cape Negrais is known under the name of Pagoda Point. At its foot, a flat has been cleared of jungle sufficiently to allow of the erection of a few fishermens' huts. Negrais harbour is said to be, without exception, the most secure in the Bay of Bengal, as from hence a ship launches out at once into the open sea, and may work to the southward without any other impediment than the monsoon opposes.

The whole delta of the Irrawaddy, including the country southward and westward of Tonghoo, and between Cape Negrais and the Bagoo-kioup, is now called Henzawaddy. The tract lying between the Syriam river and the Sittong river, formed the ancient kingdom of Sittong, which divides Henzawaddy from Martaban. Exclusive of the delta, there is very little low land in the Birman dominions. The teak-tree does not grow here ; but even at a short distance

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

from Syriam, the country is dry and hilly. The soil is remarkably fertile, and produces the finest rice.

VOYAGE UP THE IRRAWADDY.

THE voyage from Rangoon to the capital in the dry season, may be accomplished in little more than a month ; it occupied, however, Colonel Symes and Captain Cox fifty-one and fifty-two days. The stream is always very rapid, but, at the season of its increase, it would become too powerful to admit of any boats proceeding upwards, were it not for the assistance of the south-west monsoon, which sets in at the same period, and enables them to stem the current. The navigation, however, is troublesome and tedious, owing to the frequent halts which it is necessary to make, to afford rest to the boatmen. Mr. Judson descended the river from Ava to Rangoon in twelve days.*

The boats which navigate the Irrawaddy in large fleets, and are constantly plying on its waters, are

* Colonel Symes left Rangoon on May 29, 1795, and reached Amerapoora on the 20th of July ; the river was then regularly on its increase. Captain Cox set out from Rangoon December 5, 1796, at which season the stream was at the lowest, and reached the capital on January 25th. Mr. Judson embarked December 21st, 1819, and reached the landing place of the capital January 25, being only the thirty-sixth day. On his return, he left Amerapoora on the 6th of February, and arrived at Rangoon on the 18th, being just a third of the time required to ascend the river, and not a fourth of the interval occupied by the voyage of Colonel Symes. In like manner, in ascending the Magdalena, boats are sometimes delayed, in the rainy season, from fifty to sixty days ; the average time is about twenty-five days ; whereas in descending, the voyage may be accomplished in seven days. Ten leagues is reckoned, in going up the stream, "a good day's journey."—See MOD. TRAV., *Colombia*, p. 300, &c.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

constructed on a commodious plan, and are well adapted to make their course against the powerful stream. A boat sixty feet in length measures not more than twelve feet across in the widest part. But the consequence of their being thus long and narrow is, that they not only require a great deal of ballast, but would be in constant danger of oversetting, were they not provided with outriggers, consisting of thin boards, or buoyant bamboos, which compose a platform extending horizontally six or seven feet on the outside of the boat from stem to stern; so that the vessel can incline no further than until the platform touches the edge of the water, when she immediately rights. Upon this platform the boatmen ply their oars, or impel the vessel forward by poles.* Here the crew sleep by night, and live by day; protecting themselves from the weather by putting up mats, or spreading a sail from the roof of the boat to the outside edge. A sort of cabin is constructed by taking away one thwart beam near the stern, laying a floor two feet below the gunwale, and raising an arched roof about seven feet above the floor; a commodious room is thus formed, 14 feet in length and 10 feet in width, together with a small closet. At the stern is a stage, on which the *leedegee* or steersman takes his stand. A vacant space is left of about seven feet, where a kettle may be boiled and dinner cooked. On each side of the cabin, a door opens on the platform, and there are windows which admit of a free circulation of air. The roof is made of bamboos covered with mats, and over all is extended a piece of canvass that effectually secures it from the heaviest rain.. The inside is neatly lined with mat-

* In the same manner the roof of the *champans*, or flat-bottomed boats used on the Magdalena, serve as a deck for the boatmen, on which they stand to push along the boat with their poles.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

ting. A vessel of this bulk will require a crew of twenty-six boatmen, besides the *leedejee*, who acts as captain. Boats of precisely similar construction, with the exception of the outriggers, are described by Herodotus, and are still to be seen represented on the sculptured walls of the Egyptian temples.

The Irrawaddy, or, as it might be rendered, Elephantine river,* has been supposed to derive its name from the vast herds of that majestic animal which abound on its banks. As the word, however, is Sanscrit, this is not so likely, as that it has a mythological reference, or that the sacred name of the Indian Iravati has been transferred to the Birman river; agreeably to the practice of all colonists, who love to bestow, on the ground of some real or fancied analogy, the names of their native scenes on new regions. Deep jungles skirt the banks of the river in this part, and, as usual in all uncleared tracts under this latitude, there is no trifling drawback on the pleasures of the voyage, occasioned by the swarms of mosquitoes. Captain Cox describes them as the largest and most ravenous he ever met with; and Col. Symes, as venomous beyond what he ever felt. Two pairs of thick stockings were

* We have already noticed the various orthography observed by different travellers in giving the name of this river. That which we have adopted in the text, is not the most correct, but comes near the pronunciation, and has been most commonly followed in our maps. Col. Francklin writes it Era Wuddey; Mrs. Judson, A-rah-wah-tee and Aïayawotte; others, Iravati and Irabati; from which it is easy to suppose that the word Ava has been formed. In like manner, the Elephantine river of India, the third of the Punjab, is called the Ravey, a corruption of Iravati, which the Greeks turned into Hydroates or Hydravates. The Nile also, which the Irrawaddy in many respects resembles, had the same title of Elephantine where it entered Egypt from the north, although the elephant is believed not to be indigenous in Africa.—See *note* at p. 4.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

insufficient to guard against their attacks. The servants, and even the boatmen, got no rest all night. A kind of reed that grows on the banks, breeds and harbours them in the greatest abundance. Fortunately, this pest does not extend many miles up the river: a war-boat, quickly rowed, can soon escape from them, but a heavy vessel must lie for one tide exposed to their action. "They assailed us," says Col. Symes, "even in the day-time, and in such numbers, that we were obliged to fortify our legs with boots, and put on thick gloves, while, by continual flapping with a handkerchief, we endeavoured to defend our faces. But no sooner had darkness commenced, than these troublesome insects redoubled their attacks in such multitudes, of such a size, and so venomous, that, were a European with a delicate skin to be exposed uncovered to their ravages for one night, it would nearly prove fatal. The Birman boatmen, whose skins are not easily penetrated, cannot repose within their action, and the Bengal servants actually cried out in torment."* Indigo is cultivated here in patches on the

* This is nothing to the insect plagues of the New World. Along the whole course of the Magdalena, innumerable insect tormentors wage war upon the lord of the creation. Mosquitoes near the sea, and further up, enormous flies glut themselves with his blood.—See Mod. Trav., *Colombia*, p. 292. A very interesting account of the singular manner in which these insects attach themselves to a particular spot, exhibiting varieties of species in the space of a few leagues, and never intermixing, and of other phenomena connected with their geographical distribution, may be found in Humboldt's Pers. Narr., vol. v. pp. 85—118. "How comfortable must people be in the moon!" said an Indian to Father Gumilla; "she looks so beautiful and clear, that she must be free from mosquitoes." When two persons meet in the missions of the Orinoco, the first questions they address to each other are: "How did you find the *zancudoes* (venomous gnats) during the night? How stand we to-day as to mosquitoes?" "These questions," adds the learned Traveller, "remind us of a Chinese form of politeness, which indicates the

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

banks of the river, which are generally about a mile apart, with houses scattered at intervals. "Wherever I have landed," says Capt. Cox, "the natives have appeared to me as well lodged, clothed, and fed, as the peasantry of any part of India I have seen. Every family plant their own indigo, cotton, and paddy; and the women spin, manufacture, and dye all the cloth necessary for their own consumption, while the men attend the labours of the field. Considering that there is no encouragement for exporting the surplus produce, I am at a loss to account for any appearance of opulence among them. That they have some commerce is, however, certain, from the number of excellent boats of burthen that are seen lying at every considerable town, or passing and repassing.

Above Panlang, the influence of the tide becomes weaker, and the water during the ebb is fresh. At Ran-gen-tsen-yah, (or, as Colonel Symes writes it, Yangain-chain-yah,) a village about forty miles from Rangoon, the traveller passes out of the Panlang or Rangoon stream, and enters into the great Irrawaddy. The course of the stream is here nearly south, and

ancient state of that country. Salutations were made heretofore in the *celestial empire* in the following words: *Vou-to-hou* — implying, Have you been incommoded in the night by the serpents?" As both the mosquitoes and the gnats pass two-thirds of their lives on the water, in the forests crossed by great rivers, they generally become more rare in proportion as the traveller recedes from the shore. In that zone, "where the barometer becomes a clock," the true mosquito is not a nocturnal insect: their reign lasts from six in the morning till five in the afternoon, when they are succeeded by twilight tormentors (*tempraneros*), and these again give place to the *sancudoes*, who fly by night. This voracious appetite for blood, in insects that live on vegetable juices, and in countries so thinly inhabited, is very surprising. "What would these animals eat if we did not pass this way?" say the Creoles in ascending the American rivers.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

about a mile wide. Thus far, progress is made principally by rowing and poleing along the boats; but now the river being no longer enclosed by high and close banks, the boatmen spread their canvass, and take advantage of the strong southerly gales to ascend the stream.*

Denoobew (Da-noo-byoo), about sixty miles from Rangoon, which Colonel Symes passed early on the sixth day, is an extensive town, with a lofty temple, resembling Shoe-dagun in form, but of smaller size. There is here a manufactory of mats, which are made in beautiful variety, and superior in quality to what are fabricated in any other part of the empire. "We passed in the course of this day's journey," (the fifth from Rangoon,) proceeds Colonel Symes, "many islands of sand formed by different streams of the river in the dry season, but which are entirely covered when the waters swell: on some of these islands there

* From Mr. Judson's Journal, we take the following itinerary:—First Day (Dec. 21). To Kyee-myen-daing, a village. Second day. Reached at noon, Kyoon-noo, a cluster of villages, near one of which, about twenty miles from Rangoon, they remained the rest of the day. Third day. Passed into the Irrawaddy, and reached Ran-gen-tsen-yah, twenty miles from Kyoon-noo. Fourth day. Passed Da-hoo-byoo. Sixth day. Passed Hen-tha-dah. Tenth day. Reached Kah-noung, a considerable town, ninety miles from Rangoon. Twelfth day (Jan. 1). Passed a remarkably high, rocky mountain, the side of which, for a considerable extent, is indented with numerous recesses, containing images of Gaudama, all carved out of the solid rock. Thirteenth day. Passed the large towns of Shway-doung and Pah-doung, on opposite sides of the river, and reached Pyee (Prome), 120 miles from Rangoon. On January 17, being the twenty-eighth day, they reached Pah-gan, distant about 200 miles from Rangoon. Here the river bends to the east, and forms a point. On the 20th. Reached Gnah-myah-gnay. 22d. Passed the confluence of the Kyen-duem with the Irrawaddy. 25th. Passed Old Ava and Tsah-gaing; and about noon, reached O-ding-mau, the lower landing-place of Ahmarapoora, about 350 miles from Rangoon.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

are trees and verdure. We left the towns of Segah-ghee on the east, and Summeingtoh on the west. Our voyage this day was delightful; the weather turned out fine, and the wind was so strong, that we passed the banks at the rate of *three miles an hour.* There were no fewer than a hundred sail of boats of different sorts in company, and the whole was a cheerful and pleasing sight. We stopped at sunset near the town of Yeoung-benzah. The next day (the sixth), we passed several islands of sand. In one place, we perceived the roots and stump of a tree growing close to the water's edge under a high bank, about fourteen feet beneath the surface of the soil. This singular appearance is to be accounted for by supposing that, where the bank is now raised, there had formerly been a sand-bank level with the water, on which a tree had taken root, and which had been covered by annual deposites from the river during the inundation. It is probable, that the tall reeds and coarse grass which every year rot and incorporate with the sand of the river, form the fine soil of the plains. Thus, aquatic *exuviæ* are to be discovered every where deep in the earth. The stream, however, washes away on one side as much as it deposits on the other; and, as is the case with all streams flowing through champaign countries, is continually changing its channel. In the morning we passed Taykyat, a long and straggling town on the west side; also Terriato, or Mango village, small, but beautifully situated on a high bank that commands the country on the opposite side to a great distance: it is surrounded by groves of mango-trees, from which it takes the name. Taam-boo-terra, on the same side, is a long town. The country, in this day's voyage, did not appear so well inhabited as that we passed through the day before.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

At half-past four, we halted for the night at Kioum-zeik, or the convent stairs. Two temples, not very large, but gilded from top to bottom, here make a brilliant appearance. There are many monasteries, and the rhahaans are seen strolling about in considerable numbers." This appears to be a very flourishing place, possessing a manufacture of cotton cloth. Several water-courses which intersect the town, have good wooden bridges built over them. Near the river are some fields planted with indigo, which thrives luxuriantly, and might be cultivated to great advantage; but the natives either do not know the process, or do not take the trouble of purifying and reducing it to a hard substance, being satisfied with using it in a coarse liquid state, to colour the coarse calicoes manfactured here.

Near Kioum-zeik is the much more ancient town of Henzadah (Hen-thah-dah). Buffaloes and other cattle were seen in large herds grazing on the neighbouring plain. In this vicinity, the reedy banks again renew the visitation of the annoying musquitoes. A little above this place, a considerable branch of the river goes off in a south-westerly course to Bassein: it is sometimes called *Anou-kioup*, or the western river. The great Arracan chain of hills are visible in the north-west quarter. On the eighth day, passing several small villages, Colonel Symes reached a town called Ackeo. The course of the river was sluggish, running deep beneath an overhanging bank; and the thermometer, which, on the preceding day, had stood at 78°, rose to 86°; but still, the heat was not oppressive. The next evening they stopped close to the town of Gnapee-zeik,* having passed this day

* *Gnapee* is a sort of sprat, which, "half pickled, half putrid," is

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

Shwaye-gaim, so named because gold dust is sometimes found here in the sands, washed down by the rains. The banks of the river in this part are covered with reeds six feet high, which harbour numerous tigers. Near Gnapee, the western bank is planted with pipal and mango-trees; and near Kanoung-lay, which they passed on the following day, on the same side, were seen orchards of mango, plantain, jack-fruit, and custard apple. The adjacent fields were enclosed with good fences; many boats were building on the banks; and the general aspect of things denoted prosperity. A little further is Kanoung-ghe, or Great Kanoung; "a long town, with a good quay and well-constructed stairs, consisting of a hundred steps, descending to the water's edge." The country is tolerably well cleared in this part, and the population of the district must apparently be considerable. The thermometer at two o'clock this day rose to 94°. A few quails and wild pigeons were noticed in the evening.

Early on the eleventh day, Colonel Symes reached Meyah-oun, formerly Loonzay, distant about 100 miles from Rangoon, the scene of obstinate contests between the Birmans and the Peguans. This is a very ancient city, stretching two miles along the margin of the river, and is distinguished by numerous gilded temples and spacious convents. A great variety of tall, wide-spreading trees gives this place an air of venerable grandeur; several rhahaans were luxuriously reposing under their shade. At the time of Colonel Symes's visit, two hundred large boats, each, on an average, of sixty tons burthen, lay off the

a favourite sauce with the Birmans, as a relish to their rice. *Zeik* signifies a landing-place.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

quay, all provided with good roofs, and masted after the country manner. The neighbourhood is uncommonly fruitful in rice, and a large quantity is annually exported to the capital. Here are capacious granaries belonging to the king, built of wood, and covered with thatch; these are kept filled with grain, ready to be transported to any part of the empire in which there happens to be a scarcity. During this day's voyage, the Anou-pec-tou-miou, or great western chain of mountains, was distinctly visible. The particular mountains in sight are named Taungzo. The districts passed through seemed exceedingly populous, and in most parts cultivated.

As they advanced, the next day, towards the town of Peing-ghee (or Pohem-ghee), the western range of hills closed upon the river, and displayed in some places very beautiful scenery. The rocky banks rise abruptly to the height of two or three hundred feet, richly clothed with hanging trees of variegated foliage.*

* Captain Cox, describing apparently the same part of this voyage, but at a different season, (Dec.) says: "About noon" on the fifteenth day, "as we approached the mountains on the western shore, a beautiful view opened to us. To the west was a margin of bright sand, backed by a green bank and woody hill; to the northward, high and distant mountains, covered with forest-trees to their very summits; to the eastward, a high bank, with large trees and huts scattered below them, ending in an abrupt point, which closes the reach, so as to give the river here the appearance of a fine lake chequered with the boats of our fleet. As we advanced, the scene varied; many sandy islands divided the stream, some of them barren sand, others high and covered with lofty trees and cultivated ground. We advanced by the western channel, where a precipitous hill about 150 feet high, covered with trees and bushes, comes down abruptly to the river, and forms its western boundary. The basis of this hill is a crumbling rock of yellow, coarse grit sand; the superstratum, an immense bed of rich sandy loam. The stream here is about a quarter of a mile wide, and pretty rapid. When we had passed these cliffs, we came to a

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

Owing to the narrowness of the channel in this part, the stream is so rapid that oars are useless, and the perpendicular banks afford no foot-path to track; it is therefore necessary to impel the boat forward by bamboo poles, in the use of which the Birmans are very expert. The town of Peing-ghee, and that of Sahlahdan, a little above it, export a great part of the teak-timber that is carried to Rangoon. The forests extend along on the western mountains, and are in sight from the river. The trees are felled in the dry season, and, when the monsoon sets in, are borne by the torrents to these towns. Colonel Symes saw here on the stocks, a ship of 400 tons burthen, building for a Mussulman merchant of Surat. Ship and boat building is here most actively carried on. The teak-tree, although it will grow on the plains, is a native of the mountains. The forests, like most of the woody and uncultivated parts of India, are extremely pestiferous. "An inhabitant of the champaign country considers a journey thither, as almost inevitable destruction. The wood-cutters are a particular class of men, born and bred in the hills; but even these are said seldom to attain longevity." The timber is sold very cheap. A plank three inches thick, and from sixteen to twenty feet long, may be purchased for a tecal or about half a crown.

The scenery of the river in the approach to Prome

beautiful valley, in which is situated the town of Pohem-ghee. The hills here make a bend to the westward, and send down another branch of the river, forming a beautiful gorge or valley, variegated with gentle risings: all the flat grounds are cultivated with paddy."—*Journal*, pp. 24, 5. The precipitous hill above mentioned, must be the rocky mountain referred to by Mr. Judson, as exhibiting numerous sculptures on the face of the rock; but it is remarkable, that neither Col. Symes nor Captain Cox should notice them.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

or Peeaye-mew, is pleasingly diversified with hill and valley, with spots of cleared ground and hanging woods. The range of high mountains recedes in a westerly direction, but smaller hills still skirt the river. Several populous towns occur: the principal is Podung-mew, on the right bank; and Schwaye-do-mew, on the left or eastern bank of the river. The city of Prome, also situated on the east side of the Irrawaddy, in lat. 18° 50′ N., and long. 95° E., forms an important point of the line of towns, being, in fact, the most northern fortress of Pegu. Many ages ago, it was the residence of a dynasty of Talien kings: it now forms a vice-royalty, usually conferred on a member of the reigning family. Prome is sometimes called *Terreketteree*, or single-skin; and they have a legendary tale respecting the origin of this name, which recalls, on the banks of the Irrawaddy, the fabled origin of Carthage and of Troy. "It is related, that a favourite female slave of Tutebong-mangee, or the mighty sovereign with three eyes, importuned her sovereign for a gift of some ground, and being asked, of what extent, replied in similar terms with the crafty queen when she projected the site of Carthage. Her request was granted, and she used the same artifice."*

The city is situated on the south side of a pleasant valley, on an elevated point projecting into the river. "At present," says Capt. Cox, who visited it in December, when the water was low, "it is about forty feet above the level of the river, which rises during the rains about twenty or twenty-five feet. Its area, north and south, is about one mile and a half, and its breadth about three-fourths of a mile. It was

* Symes, vol. ii. p. 182.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

formerly surrounded with a wall of masonry: parts of two or three bastions, towards the river, still remain. They are in the old style of fortifications, with battlements intended for musketry only, the ramparts not having sufficient breadth to admit of cannon, which, if mounted, must have been fired *en barbet*. The intermediate spaces, where the old wall has fallen to ruins, are defended by a stockade of teak piles, about one foot square, and twenty feet high. In this stockade are many gates and steps of wood leading to the river, for the accommodation of the inhabitants. Within the stockade are several pagodas, some of them gilt; the rest of the buildings are mean; some few are of wood, but the greater part are built of bamboos and cadjan. The only regular street leads through the centre of the town, north and south, the other quarters being only divided by crooked lanes and alleys. A large proportion of the inhabitants were stated to be Mohammedans. Its old fortifications and the remains of religious edifices attest its former opulence, and its position on the river renders it still a commanding post; it is also centrical to the best parts and the most populous districts of Ava. The hills with which it is surrounded, abound with teak timber, and are rich in metals: lead and iron only are at present got from them, in small quantities, but gold has been, and may be obtained. The iron is said to be softer and more malleable than any imported; and is preferred by the natives, who manufacture it into many articles for their own consumption.* Teak timber is the chief

* The tribe of smiths, including all the artificers of metals, (of which a considerable number reside in Prome, where the best iron is procured,) are particularly fond of horse-flesh, supposing it to be particularly adapted to recruit their strength, when wasted by working at their forges. To the disgusting practice of eating the

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

article of trade, to which may be added cotton, grain, rope, and paper manufactured into umbrellas, books, &c." A ship of 300 tons was on the stocks when Captain Cox visited it. The difficulty of getting the vessel down in safety to Rangoon must be considerable, as the current is so rapid; and their effecting it serves as a proof of their enterprise, and shews what they are capable of doing if encouraged. Stone-cutters also are numerous, who manufacture flags for pavements, and slabs and vases for the use of temples, out of a fine freestone found in the neighbourhood. Adjacent to the town, Colonel Symes states, there is a royal menagerie of elephants, consisting of two rows of lofty well-built stables, in which these animals are lodged during the rains. Altogether, Prome is one of the most important places in the empire. The situation is deemed particularly salubrious. The river here flows in a bold, straight channel, from one mile to half a mile in breadth. To the westward, the hills, for several miles above and below the town, form the bank of the river. When the British troops advanced upon this place in April 1825, all the surrounding hills were fortified to their very summits, presenting a position of a very formidable appearance, and in reality so strong by nature, that 10,000 steady soldiers could have defended it against an attack of ten times that force. The stockade itself was complete, and great

putrid flesh of diseased animals, is attributed the prevalence of a dreadful disorder, which attacks the extremities, producing ulcerous sores, which soon mortify, and leave those who survive, disgusting and mutilated objects. The beggars of the country are chiefly composed of this class, who wander about in groupes, assembling at the feasts of the principal pagodas, where they are relieved by the bounty of the devout and the humane. With the exception of persons of this description, there is not a beggar to be seen in the Birman dominions.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

labour must have been bestowed upon it. "Indeed, both in materials and workmanship," adds General Sir A. Campbell in his despatch, "it surpasses any thing we have hitherto seen in this country."* The place was, nevertheless, evacuated by night on the advance of the British troops—apparently in confusion, as above 100 pieces of artillery were found in the works, and extensive granaries well filled with corn. Either by accident or through design, the town was on fire when our troops entered it; one whole quarter was reduced to ashes, and much grain destroyed, before it could be got under.†

About five miles from Prome, in a southerly direction, there are remains of a still more ancient city, called by Col. Symes Yættee, by Capt. Cox written Therai-Kittra, which, some centuries ago, was the capital of a dynasty of Peguan kings. A level road,

* Col. Symes mentions the ruins of an ancient fort at the upper end of the city, "a small pentagon built of brick, which, from its situation, must have been very strong. The modern fort," he adds, "is nothing more than a palisadoed enclosure, with earth thrown up behind it." But this was thirty years ago. These stockades have been found no contemptible defence.

† From subsequent accounts, it would seem to have been intentionally set on fire. "It has been proved to me beyond a doubt," writes Sir A. Campbell, "that strong reinforcements and thirty pieces of cannon were within a short march of Prome, when I took possession of it. These troops have now very generally dispersed. Prince Sarawuddy is retiring direct upon the capital, with the remnant of his people. Desolation marks his track, and the merest cottage does not escape the incendiary's torch. Prompt and decisive measures alone saved Prome from the general conflagration, and its inhabitants from a wretched fate....The inhabitants are coming in in great numbers, and even chiefs of towns and villages are now suing for passes of protection. They appear highly delighted at being relieved from a state of oppressive tyranny, that either compelled them to take up arms in a hopeless cause, or drove them into the jungles, with their families, to lead a life of wretchedness."—*Asiat. Journal*, vol. xx. p. 684.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

through cultivated fields interspersed with groves of tall palmyra-trees, leads from Prome to this place. He observed in the way, two rivers almost dry, but which, in the rainy season, pour down an impetuous torrent from the mountains into the Irrawaddy, bearing down the teak timber from the forests above. It was dusk before Col. Symes reached Yættee. He entered the place through an old gateway, which appeared narrower, but of greater depth, than any that he had seen; but the ruinous state of both the gateway and the wall rendered it difficult to judge of their original dimensions. Within, he could distinguish nothing but houses and fields, and it was too late to explore the antiquities. Two intelligent men informed him, that it was once a fortified city of importance, of a square form,* measuring a space equal to two miles and a half; that it had flourished for several centuries before the fall of the Pegu monarchy; and that the vestiges of the imperial palace and a large temple were still remaining. During his ride, he observed two caravans of waggons drawn up in the form of a double circle, one within the other, presenting a very formidable barrier against the assaults either of men or of wild beasts. They were loaded chiefly with *gnapee* and salt-fish, from the town of Omow, situated on a lake where fish is caught in such abundance, as to constitute an article of commercial exportation. The roads appeared well made and much frequented; and the *ledgeree* or steersman, who had travelled by land from Prome to Rangoon, a journey of six days, reported it to be equally good the whole way. By similar caravans of waggons is conducted a

* According to information given to Capt. Cox, it was of a circular form, three miles in diameter, and surrounded with walls of masonry.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

very important branch of Chinese commerce. Passing through the centre of the Birman dominions, they penetrate the Arracan chain of mountains, and thus traverse the whole country, from the Chinese province of Yunnan, on the eastern frontier of Birmah, to the banks of the Brahmaputra and the Bengal provinces.

Leaving Prome at an early hour, with a strong southerly gale, Col. Symes reached, towards evening, the town of Kammah or Comma, on the western bank of the Irrawaddy.* They did not stop here, but continued their course as far as Neoung-ben-zeik (or Nenbon-zeik),† where the boats were moored for the night. "This also," he says, "is a town of some respectability." Among the chief places passed this day, was Pou-oo-daung, a small village on the western bank, behind which abruptly rises a hill of a conical form, on the top of which is a temple of peculiar sanctity, having once been, as legends say, the abode of Gaudama, the impression of whose foot is shewn indented on a slab of marble. Obscure hamlets, at distant intervals, just served to shew that this part of the country was not without inhabitants. Comma is the chief town of a district, and sends large quantities of teak timber to Rangoon. "The fort," Capt. Cox says, "lies three miles inland, on a rivulet that empties itself into the Irrawaddy, and is navigable, in the rains, for large boats almost all the way to Arracan. Here also is the high road by which the merchants who

* Capt. Cox did not reach Comma till the noon of the day after leaving Prome.

† This, we presume to be the place that is afterwards called, in Col. Symes's Narrative, Yeoungben-zeik, or Indian fig-tree stairs, and described as a fine village, on the east side of the river, in a romantic country. In the despatches from General Campbell, it is written Nenbonzick. Col. Symes places Comma also on the east side, whereas it is on the west bank.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

trade to Dacca, bring their goods on bullocks and in covered carts. The numerous religious buildings in the town indicate its opulence."

The next evening, Col. Symes reached a town called Sirriap-mew, and, by noon the next day, the town of Mee-a-day, the personal estate of the then maywoon of Pegu, generally called on that account Meeaday-praw. Here they halted for nine days, a temporary house being constructed for their accommodation, consisting of three small rooms and a hall open to the north: it was got ready for their reception in little more than four hours. "Fifty or sixty labourers completed it in that time, and on emergency could perform the work in much less. Bamboos, grass for thatching, and the ground rattan, are all the materials requisite. Not a nail is used in the whole edifice. A row of strong bamboos, from eight to ten feet high, are fixed firm in the ground, which describe the outline, and are the supporters of the building. Smaller bamboos are then tied horizontally, by strips of the ground rattan, to these upright posts. The walls, composed of bamboo mats, are fastened to the sides by similar ligatures. Bamboo rafters are quickly raised, and a roof formed, over which thatch is spread in regular layers, and bound to the roof by filaments of rattan. A floor of bamboo grating is next laid inside, elevated two or three feet above the ground; this grating is supported on bamboos, and covered with mats and carpets. Thus ends the process, which is not more simple than effectual. When the workmen take pains, a house of this sort is proof against very inclement weather. We experienced during our stay at Meeaday, a severe storm of wind and rain, but no water penetrated; and if the tempest should blow down the house, the inhabitants would run no risk of

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

having their brains knocked out, or their bones broken: the fall of the whole fabric would not crush a lady's lap-dog.

"Meeaday is a place of no great magnitude, but extremely neat. There are two principal streets, and at the north end of the present town are to be seen the ruins of a brick fort, which, like all other forts of masonry in the Birman empire, is in a state of dilapidation. At a short distance there is a pleasant river, which flows through a fertile plain, affording some rich pasture-ground, and interspersed with plantations of tobacco. On the south and south-east sides, the town is inclosed by a deep ravine, the banks of which are cut perpendicular; and the remains of an old brick wall were discoverable, which was probably a defence to the former suburb. We observed many small temples and convents apart from the town, situated in groves of mango, tamarind, and pipal trees of uncommon stateliness and beauty. The maywoon had a residence here; also a pleasure-house and betel-garden at some distance. North of the town, there is a good deal of land in cultivation, chiefly rice. The fields are well laid down and fenced. This quarter is beautifully wooded and diversified with rising grounds. We observed many cart-roads and path-ways leading into the country in various directions. The soil is composed of clay and sand, and in some places is very stony, particularly near the river."

The point to which we have now conducted our readers, was the limit to which, in this direction, the British army had driven back the Birman forces, when, on the 17th of September last (1825), an armistice was concluded, with a view to the restoration of peace and amity between the contending powers. The third article of the armistice provides, that "a line of

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

demarcation shall be drawn between the two armies, commencing at Comma, passing through the village of Nenbonzick, and continuing along the road from that village to Tonghoo. The negociations for peace were to be carried on at Nenbonzick, or Nembenziek, as being half way between the armies, the British quartered at Prome, and the Birman head-quarters at Meeaday. Here, then, we shall for the present suspend our progress northward; and before we take leave of the kingdom of Pegu, on the confines of which we now find ourselves, we shall gather up what further information we possess respecting this important province of the Birman empire.

PEGU.

THE site of Pegu, the ancient capital, situated about ninety miles by water above Rangoon, in lat. 17° 40′ N., long. 96° 12′ E., may still be traced by the ruins of the ditch and the wall which once surrounded it. The inside displays a striking and melancholy picture of fallen grandeur, and gives sad evidence of the ruthless character of Birman warfare. Alom-praw, when he took the city in 1757, razed every building to the ground, and dispersed or led into captivity all the inhabitants: the praws, or temples, only were spared, and of these, the great pagoda of Shoe-madoo has alone been kept in repair. After it had long lain in desolation, Minderajee-praw, to conciliate the natives, issued orders, about the year 1790, to rebuild Pegu, and invited its scattered families to re-people their deserted city.* At the same time, the maywoon was ordered to

* The order for the rebuilding of the ancient capital of the Talien monarchy, which Col. Symes represents as originating in liberal policy on the part of Minderajee-praw, is ascribed by Dr.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

remove hither from Rangoon, and to make it the seat of his government. The present inhabitants are chiefly rhahaans, or priests, followers of the provincial government, and poor Talien families, glad to regain a settlement in their once magnificent metropolis. Their numbers altogether, perhaps, do not exceed 6 or 7000. Those who dwelt there in its days of splendour are nearly extinct, and their descendants and relatives are scattered over the provinces of Tonghoo and Martaban. Many also took refuge in Siam.

The kingdom of Pegu has unquestionably been the most powerful of all the Indo-Chinese states; and the central position of this province, its abundant fertility of soil, and its mineral wealth, might again render it a flourishing country. We have, in the Travels of Vincent Le Blanc, a most romantic account of what Pegu was in the seventeenth century. "The kingdom of Pegu," he says, "is one of the largest, richest, and most potent of the Indies, next to the Mogul and China; but to the two last are happened lately strange revolutions: they are extremely fallen off from their state, and have been dismembered by the kings of Tungu and of Arracan, who had, in my time, the possession of the white elephant that bred so much contention in Siam. This kingdom, in my days, contained many others; viz. two empires, containing

Buchanan to a very different motive. "Prophecies and dreams are also in great credit among the Birmans. We were informed, that a prophecy having lately been current, foretelling that Pegu would again be the seat of government, the king was thrown into considerable anxiety, and thinking to elude the prophecy, had sent orders to the maywoon of Haynthawade (Henzawudy) to remove the seat of his government from Rangoon to Pegu, then in ruins. The late maywoon was so attached to Rangoon, that he always found some excuse for delaying the execution of the order; but while we were in Birmah, his successor was busily employed in rebuilding Pegu."—*Asiat. Reg.*, vol. vi. p. 173.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

twenty-six crowned states. The town of Pegu is very large and square, five gates on every side, encompassed with a deep work or trench, full of water-crocodiles. The walls are built of wood, with watch-towers of rich work and gilt, repaired every tenth year. The houses are stately edifices. At New Pegu, the king keeps his court. The streets are exactly straight, and large. About the heart of the town, you discover almost all the streets, which is a gallant curiosity. Old Pegu is built after the same model, and there the merchants inhabit. In New Pegu, the streets are set with palm-trees and cocoas loaden with fruit. The new town was framed and built by the line, near a forest of palms, towards the north, in a large field. In the trenches, (filled with water by the river that washes the coast,) are baths purposely accommodated. The town is as big as Fez. The king's palace stands at the further end of New Pegu, sheltered from the north wind by a little hill: there grow all sorts of trees, five sorts of palm-trees, enclosed with a wall like a park. The palace is built square, with a dome: at every corner stands the statue of a giant, of polished marble, who, Atlas-like, upheld this goodly fabric; and are represented with such tortions of face, you would think they complain of their load. The stone of which it is composed, is smooth and resplendent as glass: it is environed with a deep trench. The entrance is over a drawbridge, through a gate of excessive height and strength, where are the figures of a giant and his wife, each of one piece, and of a mixed coloured marble: the pavement is of the same. They spare neither gold nor azure; and in galleries we see carved the histories of all their wars. From thence, we descend some steps of marble into a lower court, encompassed with rails, where there is a pleasant

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

fountain, whence the water is conducted into several gardens by pipes. The gardens are fenced with strong walls; one of them is three miles long: the river Caypumo runs through one end of the garden, westward. There are many other gardens and palaces nearer hand, built of marble and porphyry, and a lake a mile in circuit. One of these palaces is allotted to the queen and her court, which joins to a park stored with exquisite and rare animals. In the lake belonging to the king's palace are seen all sorts of waterfowl; and near this palace there is another park stored with tame beasts and birds. There is also a park for lions, tigers, and other fierce beasts; and it is a sad sight to see criminals daily devoured by them.

"The kingdom of Pegu is rich in mines of gold and silver, rubies, sapphires, garnets, and other precious stones: these daily augment the king's treasures. In one court of his palace at New Pegu, there is such store, that it is little esteemed; not one man to guard it, nor the doors kept shut. There stands a figure or statue of an exceedingly tall man, all of beaten gold, with a crown of the same, enriched with rubies, upon his head; and round it four other statues of youths, all of gold, which seem to be idols. In another court, is represented a giant sitting, of silver, with a crown of the same, but far richer, set with jewels. In other courts, stand statues made of gauze, a mixture of many metals: the crowns of these latter are richer than the others, with rubies and sapphires.

"The Peguans go all clothed alike, in cottons, linens, and silks the best; and all are barefoot ever, whether walking or riding. Their buildings are costly, carved and wrought, sparing neither gold nor azure. When the king or any nobleman builds a palace, he provides himself with the purest gold to

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

gild it. At Old Pegu are many refiners and gold and silver beaters, who work it into leaves as we do, for the convenience of the gilders; for they gild the very walls and towers, and their houses, after the Persian fashion. New Pegu is almost all so built, and nothing spared to make up a sumptuous, splendid structure. Merchants and other tradesmen and shop-keepers live in strong houses, well built of stone or brick, close shut with strong gates and locks, and call those houses *godons*." *

When Col. Symes visited, in 1795, the site of this once magnificent capital, the building of the new town was still going forward. He thus describes the appearance which it then presented.

"The extent of ancient Pegu may still be accurately traced by the ruins of the ditch and wall that surrounded it: from these it appears to have been a quadrangle, each side measuring nearly a mile and a half. In several places the ditch is choked up by rubbish that has been cast into it, and the falling of its own banks; sufficient, however, still remains to shew that it was once no contemptible defence. The breadth I judged to be about sixty yards, and the depth ten or twelve feet. In some parts of it there is water, but in no considerable quantity. I was informed, that when the ditch was in repair, the water seldom, in the hottest season, sunk below the depth of four feet. An injudicious faussebray, thirty feet wide, did not add to the security of the fortress. The fragments of the wall likewise evince that this was a work of magnitude and labour: it is not easy to ascertain precisely what was its height, but we conjectured it at least thirty feet, and in breadth, at the base, not less than

* Asiat. Journ. vol. xix. pp. 651, 2.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

fastry. It is composed of brick, badly cemented with clay mortar. Small equidistant bastions, about 300 yards asunder, are still discoverable, and there had been a parapet of masonry; but the whole is in a state so ruinous, and so covered with weeds and briars, as to leave very imperfect vestiges of its former strength. In the centre of each face of the fort, there is a gateway about thirty feet wide; and these gateways were the principal entrances. The passage across the ditch is over a causeway raised on a mound of earth, that serves as a bridge, and was formerly defended by a retrenchment, of which there are now no traces.

"Pegu, in its renovated and contracted state, seems to be built on the plan of the former city, and occupies about one half of its area. It is fenced round by a stockade from ten to twelve feet high: on the north and east side, it borders on the old wall. The plane of the town is not yet filled with houses, but a number of new ones are building. There is one main street running east and west, crossed at right angles by two smaller streets not yet finished. At each extremity of the principal street, there is a gate in the stockade, which is shut early in the evening; and after that time, entrance during the night is confined to a wicket. Each of these gates is defended by a wretched piece of ordnance, and a few musketeers, who never post sentinels, and are usually asleep in an adjoining shed. There are two inferior gates on the north and south side of the stockade.

"The streets of Pegu are spacious, as are those of all the Birman towns that I have seen. The new town is well paved with brick, which the ruins of the old plentifully supply; and on each side of the way there is a drain to carry off the water. The houses of the meanest peasants of Pegu, and throughout the

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

Birman empire, possess manifest advantage over Indian dwellings, by being raised from the ground either on wooden posts or bamboos, according to the size of the building. The kioums or monasteries of the rhaheans, and the habitations of the higher ranks, are usually elevated six or eight feet; those of the lower classes from two to four feet.

"There are no brick buildings either in Pegu or Rangoon, except such as belong to the king, or are dedicated to their divinity, Gaudma; his majesty having prohibited the use of brick or stone in private buildings, from the apprehension, as I was informed, that if people got leave to build brick houses, they might erect brick fortifications, dangerous to the security of the state. The houses, therefore, are all made of mats, or sheathing-boards, supported on bamboos or posts; but, from their being composed of such combustible materials, the inhabitants are under continual dread of fire, against which they take every precaution. The roofs are lightly covered, and at each door stands a long bamboo, with an iron hook at the end, to pull down the thatch: there is also another pole, with a grating of iron at the extremity, about three feet square, to suppress flame by pressure. Almost every house has earthen pots, filled with water, on the roof; and a particular class of people,* whose

* "These people are called *Pagwaat;* they are slaves of government; men who have been found guilty of theft, and, through mercy, had their lives spared. They are distinguished by a black circle on each cheek, caused by gunpowder and puncturation, as well as by having on their breast, in Birman characters, the word *thief*, and the name of the article stolen; as, on one that I asked to be explained to me, *putchoo khoo*, cloth thief. These men patrole the streets at night, to put out all fires and lights after a certain hour. They act as constables, and are the public executioners."

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

business it is to prevent and extinguish fires, perambulate the streets during the night.

"The maywoon's habitation, though not at all a magnificent mansion for the representative of royalty, is, notwithstanding, a building of much respectability, compared to the other houses of Pegu. From an outside view, we judged it to be roomy, and to contain several apartments, exclusive of that in which he gives audience: it possesses, however, but few ornaments. Gilding is forbidden to all subjects of the Birman empire; liberty even to lacker and paint the pillars of their houses, is granted to very few. The naked wood gave an unfinished appearance to the dwelling of the maywoon, which, in other respects, seemed well adapted for the accommodation of a Birman family.

"The object in Pegu that most attracts and most merits notice, is the noble edifice of Shoemadoo, or the Golden Supreme. This extraordinary pile of buildings is erected on a double terrace, one raised upon another. The lower and greater terrace is about ten feet above the natural level of the ground, forming an exact parallelogram: the upper and lesser terrace is similar in shape, and rises about twenty feet above the lower terrace, or thirty above the level of the country. I judged a side of the lower terrace to be 1,391 feet; of the upper, 684. The walls that sustained the sides of the terrace, both upper and lower, are in a ruinous state: they were formerly covered with plaster, wrought into various figures. The area of the lower is strewed with the fragments of small decayed buildings, but the upper is kept free from filth, and is in tolerably good order. There is reason to conclude that this building and the fortress are coeval, as the earth of which the terraces are composed, appears to have been taken from the ditch, there

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

being no other excavation in the city, or in its neighbourhood, that could have afforded a tenth part of the quantity.

"The terraces are ascended by flights of stone steps, which are now broken and neglected. On each side are dwellings of the rhahaans, raised on timbers four or five feet from the ground. These houses consist only of a large hall; the wooden pillars that support them are turned with neatness; the roofs are covered with tiles, and the sides are made of boards. There are a number of bare benches in every house, on which the rhahaans sleep; but we saw no other furniture.

"Shoemadoo is a pyramidical building, composed of brick and mortar, without excavation or aperture of any sort, octagonal at the base, and spiral at top; each side of the base measures 162 feet: this immense breadth diminishes abruptly, and has not unaptly been compared in shape to a large speaking-trumpet. Six feet from the ground, there is a wide projection that surrounds the base, on the plane of which are fifty-seven small spires of equal size, and equidistant: one of them measured twenty-seven feet in height, and forty in circumference at the bottom. On a higher ledge there is another row, consisting of fifty-three spires of similar shape and measurement. A great variety of mouldings encircle the building; and ornaments somewhat resembling the fleur-de-lis surround the lower part of the spire; circular mouldings likewise girt it to a considerable height, above which there are ornaments in stucco, not unlike the leaves of a Corinthian capital; and the whole is crowned with a *tee*, or umbrella, of open iron-work, from which rises a rod with a gilded pennant.

"The circumference of the *tee* is fifty-six feet; it

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

rests on an iron axis fixed in the building, and is further secured by large chains strongly rivetted to the spire. Round the lower rim of the *tee* are appended a number of bells, which, agitated by the wind, make a continual jingling. The *tee* is gilt, and it is said to be the intention of the king to gild the whole of the spire. All the smaller pagodas are ornamented with proportionable umbrellas of similar workmanship, which are likewise encircled with small bells. The extreme height of the edifice, from the level of the country, is 361 feet, and above the interior terrace, 331 feet.

" On the south-east angle of the upper terrace, there are two handsome saloons, or *kioums*, lately erected, the roofs composed of different stages, supported by pillars: we judged the length of each to be about 60 feet, and the breadth 30. The ceiling of one is already embellished with gold leaf, and the pillars are lackered; the decoration of the other is not yet completed. They are made entirely of wood. The carving on the outside is laborious and minute: we saw several unfinished figures of animals and men in grotesque attitudes, which were designed as ornaments for different parts of the building. Some images of Gaudma, the supreme object of Birman adoration, lay scattered around.

" At each angle of the interior and higher terrace, there is a temple sixty-seven feet high, resembling, in miniature, the great temple: in front of that in the south-west corner, are four gigantic representations, in masonry, of *Palloo*, or the evil genius, half beast, half human, seated on their hams, each with a large club on the right shoulder. The pundit who accompanied me, said that they resembled the *Rakuss* of the Hindoos. These are guardians of the temple.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

"Nearly in the centre of the east face of the area are two human figures in stucco, beneath a gilded umbrella. One, standing, represents a man with a book before him, and a pen in his hand; he is called Thasiamee, the recorder of mortal merits and mortal misdeeds: the other, a female figure kneeling, is Mahasumdera, the protectress of the universe so long as the universe is doomed to last; but when the time of general dissolution arrives, by her hand the world is to be overwhelmed and everlastingly destroyed.

"A small brick building near the north-east angle, contains an upright marble slab, four feet high and three feet wide: there is a long legible inscription on it. I was told, it was an account of the donations of pilgrims of only a recent date.

"Along the whole extent of the north face of the upper terrace, there is a wooden shed for the convenience of devotees who come from a distant part of the country. On the north side of the temple are three large bells of good workmanship, suspended nigh the ground, between pillars; several deer's horns lie strewed around. Those who come to pay their devotions, first take up one of the horns, and strike the bell three times, giving an alternate stroke to the ground: this act, I was told, is to announce to the spirit of Gaudma the approach of a suppliant.* There are several low benches near the foot of the temple, on which the person who comes to pray, places his offering, commonly consisting of boiled rice, a plate of sweetmeats, or cocoa-nut fried in oil. When it is given, the devotee cares not what becomes of it: the

* It is deserving of remark, that the approach of a suppliant to the shrine of Jupiter Ammon in the Oasis, was announced to the divinity by the sounding of metal knobs suspended between two pillars.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

crows and wild dogs often devour it in presence of the donor, who never attempts to disturb the animals. I saw several plates of victuals disposed of in this manner, and understood it to be the case with all that was brought.

" There are many small temples on the areas of both terraces, which are neglected and suffered to fall into decay. Numberless images of Gaudma lie indiscriminately scattered. A pious Birman who purchases an idol, first procures the ceremony of consecration to be performed by the rhahaans; he then takes his purchase to whatever sacred building is most convenient, and there places it within the shelter of a kioum, or on the open ground before the temple; nor does he ever again seem to have any anxiety about its preservation, but leaves the divinity to shift for itself. Some of those idols are made of marble that is found in the neighbourhood of the capital of the Birman dominions, and admits of a very fine polish; many are formed of wood, and gilded; and a few are of silver: the latter, however, are not usually exposed and neglected like the others. Silver or gold is rarely used, except in the composition of household gods.

" On both the terraces are a number of white cylindrical flags, raised on bamboo poles; these flags are peculiar to the rhahaans, and are considered as emblematic of purity and of their sacred function. On the top of the staff there is a *henza*, or goose, the symbol both of the Birman and Pegu nations.

" From the upper projection that surrounds the base of Shoemadoo, the prospect of the circumjacent country is extensive and picturesque; but it is a prospect of nature in her rudest state; there are few inhabitants, and scarcely any cultivation. The hills of

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

Martaban rise to the eastward, and the Sitang river, winding along the plains, gives an interrupted view of its waters. To the north-west, about forty miles, are the Galladzęt hills, whence the Pegu river takes its rise; hills remarkable only for the noisome effects of their atmosphere. In every other direction, the eye looks over a boundless plain, chequered by a wild intermixture of wood and water." *

Colonel Symes, accompanied by Dr. Buchanan, took a ride for about a mile and a half to the eastward of the fort. The road lay through woods intersected by frequent pathways. A miserable hut, here and there, beneath a clump of bamboos, was the only habitation they met with; but the memorials of an extinct population were thickly strewed. Hillocks of decayed masonry, covered with a light mould, and the ruins of numerous temples, met the eye in every direction. They saw no gardens or enclosures, but the pathways, which bore the traces of cattle, indicated that the country further on was better peopled. On the western side of the river was found an inconsiderable village, in the neighbourhood of which there were rice-plantations that extended a mile to the westward. Beyond these lay a thick wood, chiefly of

* Col. Symes was told by the *zarado* of Pegu, that the temple of Shoemadoo is believed to have been founded 2,300 years ago, by two merchants, brothers, who came to Pegu from Tallo-miou, a district one day's journey's E. of Martaban. "These pious traders at first raised a temple one Birman cubit (22 inches) in height. *Sigeamee*, the spirit that presides over the elements, in one night increased its size to two cubits. The merchants then added another cubit, which Sigeamee doubled in the same short time. The building thus attained the height of twelve cubits, when the merchants desisted. The temple was afterwards gradually increased by successive monarchs of Pegu." Shoemadoo signifies literally Golden Divinity; *shoe*, or *shwa*, signifying golden, and *madoo*, being a corruption of *maha-deva* or *maha-deo*, *magnus deus*. Madhuvu is given by Mr. Ward as one of the titles of Vishnoo.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

bamboo and pipal-trees. Through this wilderness, one of the party penetrated nine or ten miles, without meeting with an inhabitant or seeing a single dwelling. "Southward of Pegu, about a mile beyond the city walls, there is a plain of great extent, for the most part overgrown with wild grass and low brushwood, and bare of timber, except where a sacred grove maintains its venerable shade. A few wretched villages are to be seen, containing not more than twenty or thirty poor habitations. Small spots have been cleared for tillage by the peasants, who seem to live in extreme poverty, notwithstanding they possess in their cattle the means of comfortable subsistence; but they do not eat the flesh, and what is remarkable enough, seldom drink the milk. Rice, *gnapee*, and oil, expressed from a small grain, with salt, are almost their only articles of food. Their cows are diminutive, resembling the breed on the coast of Coromandel; but the buffaloes are noble animals, much superior to those of India. Some are of a light cream-colour. They are used for draft and agriculture, and draw heavy loads on carts and small waggons, constructed with considerable neatness and ingenuity.

"The only article of consequence manufactured at Pegu, is silk and cotton cloth, which the women weave for their own and their husbands' use. It is wrought with considerable dexterity; the thread is well spun; the texture of the web is close and strong, and it is mostly checkered like the Scotch tartan; but they make no more than what suffices for their own consumption."

The country in this neighbourhood abounds with various kinds of game, particularly antelopes, jungle-fowl, and peacocks. Tigers prowl around the villages by night, and sometimes carry off the dogs, but do not

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

venture to attack the buffaloes, who, to all appearance, Colonel Symes says, are a match for any tiger, and almost as fierce. The inhabitants also complained of being much molested in the wet season by wild elephants, who occupy the forests in great numbers. "These powerful animals, allured by the early crops of rice and sugar-cane, make predatory excursions in large troops, and do a great deal of mischief, devastating more than they devour. The peasantry have often to lament the destruction of their more exposed plantations."

"How much is it to be lamented," exclaims Colonel Symes, "that this country, one of the fairest and most healthful on the globe, should remain, for the greater part, a solitary desert! It must require a long and uninterrupted term of peace, to renew the population of Pegu. Should it be so fortunate, there can be little doubt that Pegu will be numbered among the most flourishing and delightful countries of the East." How far recent events may conduce to so desirable a result, time will shew. If, in pursuance of our Indian policy, it should be deemed advisable to re-establish the Peguan monarchy in the person of some native chief, with a British resident at his capital, the oppressed Taliens and Carayns would joyfully hail their emancipation from their Birman masters; and the prediction which troubled Minderajee-praw, would be most singularly fulfilled.*

* The Taliens or Talains of Pegu are evidently a race of Hindoo origin, who attained civilisation at an earlier period than the Birmans. They call themselves Môn, and are termed by the Siamese Ming-môn. Their language, the Môn, has never been satisfactorily analysed. "It seems," Dr. Leyden says, "to be quite original, and is said by the Barmas (Birmans) and Siamese to have no affinity with either of their languages. In the early Portuguese histories, they are denominated the Pandalus of Môn; and they are

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

FROM PEGU TO MARTABAN.

Of the country between Pegu and Martaban, our only information is derived from the journal of the late Mr. Francis Carey, who attended the viceroy in an expedition to Martaban, in the year 1809. "The Birman army moved before daylight on the morning of the 19th of November, passed a large village called *Shoe-bon* (golden flower), and after travelling for some hours in a N.W. direction, encamped in an extensive plain, within two days' march of the river Chitoung (Zeet-taung). The first two hours, they penetrated through thick jungles of small trees and bamboos; after which they entered upon a very large plain, extending to the E. as far as the mountains, to the S.W. as far as the sea, and to the N.E. as far as the eye could reach. The plain was a complete grass jungle, with a few cultivated spots, and abounded with various kinds of wild beasts. The mountains appeared to run in a north-easterly direction from Chitoung, and to turn off again to the S. towards Martaban. The next day, the army crossed, on boats rafted together, a river called Kouban, about 200 yards broad, and not fordable. Mr. Carey supposed it to be a branch of the Chitoung, or to rise among the mountains of Tonghoo. The country during the march was a complete wilderness, covered with long grass: the course was N.E. On the 21st, the course was altered to S.E.; and after travelling through very high grass, the army encamped on the bank of the Chitoung river. The whole country from Pegu hither was an extensive plain, ap-

supposed to have founded the ancient Kalaminham empire at a very early period." Kalaminham is probably corrupted from *ning-mon*. The Môn alphabet appears to be a variety of the Pali.—See *Asiat. Res.* vol. x. p. 240.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

parently flooded during the rainy season, covered with long grass, and infested with wild beasts.* The town of Chitoung is situated on the east bank of the river; it is surrounded by a few straggling villages. The river is about half a mile in breadth, and appears to be deep and regular: it abounds with alligators. Towards the N., it runs close up under the mountains, and then strikes off to the S., till it falls into the sea. Mr. Carey *saw no mountains to the W. of the Chitoung river*, as described in Symes's Embassy. The eastern mountains are totally uncultivated and uninhabited. Around the borders are to be found a few houses of Corians (Carayns) or mountaineers. The mountains appear to be covered with large trees, with here and there a vacancy; they are said to abound with *chatts*, a large sort of deer, *chines*, a species of antelope, and tigers; and the valleys with elephants, wild hogs, deer, &c.

" The passage of the viceroy took place the next morning with great pomp: he crossed the river upon four boats lashed together, and towed by two war-boats. The troops lined the road where he landed, *sitting with their backs towards him, as a mark of very great respect.* Presents of rice, fish, and betel-nut were made to him. On the ensuing morning, the army, still directing its march to the S.E., entered the thick forests which skirt the Chitoung mountains: they were found almost impenetrable, consisting of various kinds of timber trees, among which are the *yendak*, red and black, a species of mahogany; the *moukkhou*, a tall, smooth tree, of a hard grain; the *ketchee*, yielding a useful gum, and the wood of which

* The Chitoung Sittong, or Zeet-taung river, formed the ancient boundary between the kingdoms of Pegu and Siam.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

is durable; the *peema* or *jarool*; and the *pengadoor*, the hardest wood in the Birman dominions. The road had been long ago formed by cutting away the trees. There is a shorter and better road over the plain country, but it is passable only in the months of November and December. The rate of travelling through the forests was about two miles and a half an hour: it had been four miles an hour to the Chitoung river. On the 25th, the viceroy amused himself with an elephant hunt. Next day, the track of march continued through the forests: the army encamped on the east side of the mountain called Tikklat, a cluster of six large hills. A small canal, called *Theboo*, runs from the mountain towards the Chitoung river.

"On the 27th, the army emerged from the thick forests on the banks of a beautiful river called Doungwing, or Maywing (Taungwa-kiaung), whence Mr. Carey could perceive that they had passed between two ranges of mountains: that on the W. was called Koukthinating, that on the E., Jingat, on which is a lofty pagoda. On the 28th and 29th, they again traversed dense forests; the course S.E. On the 30th, the course was altered to the E. On December 1st, the road was diversified with fine views on both sides of the mountains, spreading into an open plain or valley: those to the N.W. formed a regular range. Mr. Carey ascended one of the mountains, and found the habitations of some Corians, who are in a perfectly savage state.* The march next day diverged to the S.; and on the 3d, they reached a village called Kwy-

* Neither men, women, nor children appeared to have washed their hands or faces for months. Their faces were besmeared with the red betel, and the saliva drivelled down their chins. Their clothes were few and filthy, and swarmed with vermin; their nails were "like little spades." They use a small pipe, which is seldom

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

agan, three miles distant from Martaban. On the 4th, the army collected, and marched through the town of Martaban, which is more than a mile in length. Next day, Mr. Carey ascended one of the highest mountains, to take a view of the country, which he thus describes: 'The prospects were truly grand and magnificent. To the N. and S., the range of mountains upon which the town is situated, were to be seen as far as the eye could reach. To the E., the long and high range of mountains which separate the Birman dominions from those of Siam, run in a parallel line with those which skirt the sea-shore, at about the distance of 100 or 150 miles. To the W., was to be seen the river (the Thaluan), divided into two branches, and opening into the sea, with vast numbers of high islands scattered in different directions. The town appears to be well peopled, as does the surrounding country. The population consists of Peguans, Birmans, Siamese, and mountaineers. The town is situated on the E. side of the mountain, and a stockade runs along the top and the bottom of it; but it is now in a state of decay.'"*

In Vincent Leblanc's Travels, before referred to, we have the following brief account of Martaban: "From Siam, we came to the kingdom and town of Martabán, sometime subject to Pegu, but since to Siam. There is plenty of rice and other sorts of grain; mines of metals, rubies, and other stones; and the air is very wholesome. The capital town is Martaban, 16° N. (the true latitude is 16° 28′ N.) It hath

out of their mouths. They acknowledge no government, and live entirely on what these forests yield, together with the rice, betel, &c. which they raise, a bare sufficiency for the year's consumption.

* Asiat. Journal, vol. xx. p. 267.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

a good harbour, situate upon the river Caypumo, or rather an arm of the sea, where the tide runs strongly towards Pegu; for, whereas ordinarily it flows by degrees, with an easy motion, here it fills that arm of the sea or river on a sudden, and flows with such fury and impetuosity, as it were mountains rolled up in water; and the most rapid torrent in the world doth not parallel this in swiftness: by three passages, it fills the harbour with a most fearful force and rapidity. Martaban joins to the territories of Dougon" (probably, Dag-un, on the Syriam or eastern branch of the Rangoon river), " the remotest town of Pegu. At Martaban, some years before we made our travels there, a rich and potent king, named Chaubaina, was besieged by Bramaa of Pegu. That inhuman tyrant of Pegu put him to a cruel death, and sacked that flourishing town: it had twenty-four gates. We went from Martaban to Pegu, four small days' journey distant by land." *

In October 1824, an expedition, composed of European and native troops, was sent by General Campbell to take possession of this port. The place is described in the despatches as having a strong and commanding appearance. It is situated at the bottom of a very high hill, washed by an extensive sheet of water. On its right is a rocky mound, surmounted with a two-gun battery, with a deep *nullah* beneath. The battery communicated with a stockade of timber; and behind this was a deep wall of masonry, varying from twelve to twenty feet in thickness, with small embrasures for cannon and musketry. The stockade ran along the margin of the water for three quarters of a mile, where it joined a large pagoda, which pro-

* Asiat. Journal, vol. xix. p. 651.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

jects into the sea as a bastion. The town continues to run in an angle from the pagoda for at least a mile, terminating at the house of the maywoon, close to a stockade which extends up the hill. The rear of the town and works was protected by a thick jungle and large trees. The enemy suffered the British to reconnoitre without molestation. On the next day (the 30th), after a heavy cannonade during the night, the British troops stormed the rock on which the battery was placed; it was bravely carried, and the remaining works were soon cleared. The enemy fled at the approach of our troops, rushing into the water and the jungle by hundreds, under a destructive fire. The town was found deserted, all the property having been carefully carried off. A considerable number of prisoners, however, were taken, together with 116 pieces of cannon, mostly wall-pieces. The capture of Martaban was followed by the voluntary submission of Tenasserim, and the town and province of Yeah; Tavoy and Mergui had previously surrendered;* and thus, the whole Birman coast, from Rangoon eastward, was reduced to British authority.

The coast of Tenasserim originally formed part of the dominions of Siam, but was ceded in 1793 to Birmah. Mergui is situated about six miles up the Tenasserim river, in lat. 19° 12′ N., long. 98° 24′ E. This river, like all others in this part, has a bar, but vessels of moderate size can cross it, and the port is said to be very commodious: the largest ships can anchor in the roads. The English had a factory here in 1687, and were much esteemed. A number of Mohammedans are settled here, and some Romish

* An expedition sailed from Rangoon on the 20th August, under Lieut.-col. Miles, which soon gained possession of these valuable ports.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

Christians, who have a priest and a church. The Mergui islands, an archipelago extending along this coast 185 miles, are uninhabited, although the soil is said to be fertile. To the south of these is the island of Salanca or Junk-seylon, about 54 miles long and 15 broad, separated from the main land by a shallow channel, a mile in breadth, which is nearly dry at low water. It has a harbour at the north end, called Popra, which may be entered over a mud bar, during the spring tides, by ships drawing twenty feet of water. The anchorage round the island is generally good. There are valuable tin mines in the island, which are worked by the natives; and prior to the colonization of Prince of Wales's Island, it was a place of considerable trade. The chief town is Terrowa. The inhabitants consist of Malays, Chinese, Siamese, and Birmans. This island formed the southernmost point of the Birman empire.

Tavoy (or Daway), like Tenasserim, is at once the name of a town, a river, and a province. The town is about eight leagues up the river, in lat. 13° 13′ N., long. 98° 6′ E. A pagoda stands on the point which forms the western side of the entrance of the river. The country is stated to be extremely fertile.

The inhabitants of these provinces are said to be a peculiar tribe called Meng.* The country produces tin, sapan wood, stick-lac, corn, and *marbao*, a timber fit for ship-building. From Martaban are exported tin, rice, wild cardamums, edible birds' nests from the Andaman and Nicobar islands, and a species of caviare called *balachong*, compounded from the spawn of fish and pounded shrimps, made into thin cakes: great quantities of this article are consumed in

* Probably, Mong; and if so, they are Talain or Peguans.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

Ava and by the Malays, but it is very disgusting to a European palate. The chief trade of Martaban arises, however, from its potteries. The port is about twenty leagues E. of Rangoon river.*

We now resume our itinerary of the Irrawaddy,

* Asiat. Journ., vol. xix. p. 760. It will hardly be expected that we should undertake to expound the ancient geography of these regions, respecting which learned authorities are so much at variance. Ptolemy is almost the only ancient writer who affords any intelligible information on this point; and all he knew of the countries eastward of Ceylon, was from report. In the Periplus of the Erythean Sea, immediately after leaving the Ganges, there is said to be an island in the ocean, called *Khruse*, or the Golden Isle, which lies directly under the rising sun, and at the extremity of the world towards the east. Khruse is mentioned as an island by Mela, Dionysius, &c.; as a Chersonese by Ptolemy. According to Mela, it was an island at the promontory Tamos,—supposed to be the Tamala of Ptolemy. But what point this name denoted, is questionable. D'Anville supposes it to be Cape Negrais; yet, if so, how can the Golden Island be Malacca? The learned Editor of the Periplus, concluding Tamala to be either Cape Negrais (as D'Anville supposes), or Botermango (according to the hypothesis of M. Gosselin), is disposed to place *Khruse* at the mouth of the Irrawaddy. Here Gosselin fixes his Golden Chersonese and the river Chrysoana. "But Ptolemy," remarks Dr. Vincent, "has two provinces,—one of gold and one of silver, before he arrives at the Chersonese; and if his Kirrhadia be Arracan, these provinces must be on the western coast of Ava, above the Golden Chersonese of his arrangement." This would seem to prove that Gosselin's theory is untenable, and that D'Anville is correct in making the Aurea Chersonesus correspond to the Peninsula of Malacca, and the Magnum Promontorium to Cape Romania. Tamala may then be Malaya, and Khruse, Sumatra. The Zaba and Thagora of Ptolemy, which he mentions as ports on either side of the great promontory, are supposed to be Saber (or Saban) and Tingoram. By the river Daona, seems to be meant that from which the city of Tana-serim takes its name. Here it may be supposed that the *Seres* had a colony. If *Serus Fluvius* be the Meinam, as D'Anville concludes, we might expect to find traces of the same nation in this part of the ancient dominions of Siam.—See D'ANVILLE's *Anc. Geog.*, vol. ii. pp. 121—5. VINCENT's *Periplus*, vol. ii. p. 534.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

and rejoining Col. Symes at Meeaday, shall proceed to trace his route

FROM PROME TO AMARAPURA.

It has already been mentioned, that the line of demarcation agreed upon in the armistice between the British and the Birman forces, was drawn along a road leading eastward from Nenbon-zeik to Tonghoo. Respecting this important place, once the capital of a powerful state, we have at present no certain information, as it has never been visited by any European. It appears to be situated on one of the heads or tributaries of the Zeet-taung river, and is noted for its cotton-manufactories. The district is said to be fertile, but thinly inhabited; it yields the best betel-nut in the empire. Gold dust is found in the neighbourhood of the city. The prince of Tonghoo is generally one of the blood-royal. The inhabitants of this part of the empire would seem to bear not the very best character. While Colonel Symes was at Amarapura, the Tonghoo Tee-kien was residing there with a number of his followers. They are described as a class of persons notorious among the Birmans for their insolence and dishonesty. "I had before heard much," he says, "of the ferocity of these people: they were always quarrelling with the followers of the other princes, particularly those of the prince of Prome." As the military retainers of a prince do not always present the most favourable specimens of national character, it would be hardly just to draw any sweeping inferences against the people of Tonghoo from this circumstance; but it shews that national or provincial feuds and jealousies are still rife between the several tribes or clans.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

During Colonel Symes's stay at Meeaday, he made several short excursions to different parts of the country. He found little variation in its appearance, but describes it as very beautiful, though but half cultivated. He was uniformly treated with respect by the natives. Not only the better class of the inhabitants of Meeaday came to visit him, but people of condition from all the towns and villages for twenty miles round; so great was the curiosity excited by the news of the mission, to see the general of the strangers. The Colonel says, he often received eight or ten different companies in a morning. "When a party wished to be introduced, a message was sent to ask permission; which being obtained, they entered the room in a crouching position, and sat down on their heels, men and women alike. They always brought a gift of something, whatever they supposed might be acceptable,—tobacco, onions, fine rice, &c.: no company presented themselves empty-handed; it would not have been respectful. Of course, their offerings drew from me a suitable return, such as fillets of Indian muslin to the women, and a Cossembuzar silk handkerchief to the men. Several parties of women came unaccompanied by their husbands or any of their male friends; and according to the notions entertained by them, there was nothing indecorous in it; they were unconscious of any thing but an innocent desire to gratify curiosity, and manifest respect. Women of a better class were always accompanied by a train of female attendants, and, like the sex every where, were more lively, good-humoured, and inquisitive, than the men.

Colonel Symes mentions a very remarkable object which he met with in the course of his walks,—"a flat stone, of coarse grey granite, laid horizontally on

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

a pedestal of masonry, six feet in length and three in width, protected from the weather by a wooden shed. This stone, like that at Pon-oo-dang, was said to bear the genuine print of the foot of Guadma. On the plane of the foot, upwards of one hundred emblematical figures are engraved in separate compartments. Two convoluted serpents are pressed beneath the heel, and five conch-shells, with the involutions to the right, form the toes. It was explained to be a type of the creation, and is held in profound reverence." The rhahaans made no objection to Colonel Symes's copying it. A similar impression, he was informed, is to be seen on a large rock situated between two hills, one day's journey west of Memboo. Adam's Peak, in the island of Ceylon, is impressed with another of these sacred foot-prints; and it is a tradition common to the Birmans, the Siamese, and the Singalese, that Gaudma Buddha placed one foot on the continent and the other on the island of Ceylon!

On resuming their route for the capital, with a hard gale from the south, they made way at not less than five miles an hour, and soon passed, on the western side, Meelsah-gain; "a large village at the foot of a fine, swelling, wooded lawn, ornamented with some neat temples." Beyond this occurred some villages of no note. The country seemed populous, and herds of cattle were seen grazing on the banks. The next day, they sailed till they came to an extensive island, which divides the river into two branches, and taking the eastern channel, brought to at the lower town of Loon-ghee. "Loon-ghee, or Great Cable, takes its name from a curious ligament of stone, which unites a pointed rock that rises in the middle of the stream with the opposite bank: it has the appearance of a petrified cable; and the natives

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

relate, that, a hundred years ago, a large rope floating down the river, was stopped at this place, and that, one end adhering to the rock, and the other to the bank, the rope was changed into stone. The quality which the waters of the Irrawaddy possess, of changing wood into stone, of which," continues Colonel Symes, "we afterwards saw innumerable instances, renders the transmutation of the cable by no means an impossible circumstance. They also say, that the opposite island formerly constituted part of one situated fifteen miles higher up, but was severed from it by an earthquake, and carried down to the place where it now rests. Whether removed by an extraordinary convulsion of nature, and by a still more extraordinary transportation, or whether encircled by the river from its having changed its channel, the island now constitutes a principal object in one of the finest sylvan scenes I ever beheld. From a temple above Loonghee, seated on a commanding cliff whose summit overhangs its base, the eye is gratified with a delightful combination of natural beauties. A fine sheet of water, three miles in breadth, broken by an island more than a mile long and half a mile wide, covered with trees of luxuriant foliage; eminences on the opposite shore, that rise from gently swelling grounds clothed with wood, to brown and rugged mountains, which, receding in an oblique direction, leave to the view a long and level plain;—these altogether form a landscape rarely equalled."

The embassy was detained for some days at Loonghee, in compliance with the wishes of the Maywoon who accompanied it. His infant son had been unwell for some time, and the illness had now increased to a dangerous height. "A war-boat was despatched express to the capital, to bring down medicine and a

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

celebrated professor of physic. In the mean time, all the physicians of the country, to the number of twenty, were assembled to consult and prescribe for the sick infant. The disorder was an inflammatory fever. Tea made of wild thyme, and decoctions of several vegetable productions, were the only medicines administered. They did not, however, neglect to call in the aid of supernatural remedies: incantations and amulets were used, to the efficacy of which much was attributed." While the recovery of the child continued doubtful, Colonel Symes sent his Hindoo pundit every morning to inquire after its health. The pundit was introduced into the sick chamber, where he witnessed the most amiable demonstrations of parental tenderness. Both the father and the mother were seen kneeling by the side of the infant's bed, and they attended on him day and night. At length, the twenty doctors pronounced their patient out of danger, to the joy of his parents and all their attendants.

During their detention here, Colonel Symes made several short excursions. The soil in the immediate neighbourhood is light and sandy, with many loose stones: it is very favourable for the cultivation of cotton, several plantations of which were seen. Sesamum also is sown here. The country is for the most part undulating. There are several neat villages within the distance of two or three miles. A deep ravine, formed by the monsoon rains, extends inland from the river, the banks of which are covered with stunted trees, affording shelter to numerous tigers, who abound in the adjacent forests. Partridges, hares, quails, and wood-pigeons of a beautiful plumage, may be met with in the open fields; but the jungle-fowl keep close in the thick covers, where it is dan-

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

gerous to venture after them. On the island were seen a few deer, extremely wild, and three buffaloes. The cattle used for draft and tillage are remarkably good. They put only a pair in the plough, which differs little from that of India. In their large carts, they yoke four, and often six. Colonel Symes one day met a waggon drawn by four stout oxen, driven by a country girl standing in the vehicle, who seemed to manage the reins and a long whip with equal ease and dexterity. They were going at a hard gallop,—"a novel sight to a person accustomed to the slow-moving machines of India, in which the women are almost too timorous to ride, much less to attempt to guide them." These vehicles are well constructed, and both neater and more commodious than the clumsy gawries of Hindostan. A caravan of eighteen waggons, each drawn by six bullocks, was met travelling from the south towards the capital. A good tilted roof of bamboo, covered with painted cloth, threw off the rain. "They contained not only merchandise, but also entire families,—the wives, children, monkeys, cats, parroquets, and all the worldly substance of the waggoner. Each bullock had a bell under his throat. The wheels not being greased, a horrid noise announced the approach of the caravan long before it could be seen. They travel slowly, from ten to fifteen miles a day. At night, the waggons are disposed in a circle, and form a barrier, within which the carriers feed their cattle, light fires, and dress their victuals, secure from the attacks of tigers, which much infest the less populous parts of the empire." A well-frequented road leads from Loon-ghee to the city of Tonghoo, distant fifteen days' journey.

At length, the embassy proceeded, and reached, at the end of the first day's voyage, Mee-ghe-oung-yay,

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

or Crocodile Town, a place of considerable trade on the western bank. Nearly a hundred large boats and several smaller ones were lying off the stairs; they were taking on board rice, garlic, onions, and oil, for the consumption of the capital. The fields in this neighbourhood are divided by thorn hedges; the low grounds are planted with rice, and the higher lands with leguminous shrubs, or are left for pasture. Some neat farms were observed, each containing four or five cottages, better built than the houses in general are in the towns, and fenced round with wide enclosures for the cattle. In this day's voyage, they passed many towns and villages, and, about half way, another island, two miles in extent, on which was a pyramidal temple called *Keendoo-praw*, together with several smaller ones. The next day, they passed Patanagoh, a long, straggling village, with a richly gilded temple. Every house had a comfortable garden, enclosed with a bamboo railing, with orchards of palmyra, plantain, and mango-trees. Near this place, which is on the eastern shore, the villagers were seen cutting the ripened indigo. On the western side, Melloon seemed rich in temples, but not otherwise important. Numerous villages were seen this day, and several sandy islands. In the evening, they brought to on the eastern side, between the towns of Magway and Spanzeik. Low, woody hills now begin to skirt the river, particularly on the eastern bank. The summits of some of these hills are crowned with temples: one on the western bank, called Maynbu, appeared to be considerable. The river, where not interrupted by islands, is not less than two miles across.

After passing various villages, (among others, *Shoe-lee-rua*, or Golden-boat-village, so called from its being inhabited by watermen in the *golden* service,)

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

the embassy reached, in the afternoon of the third day, Yanangheoum (Ranangoong), or Earth-oil-creek, which derives its name from the wells of petroleum in the neighbourhood. The aspect of the country now became totally changed. The surface is broken into small, separate hills, entirely barren; the only vegetation consists of some stunted bushes that grow on the declivities and in the dells, and a few unhealthy trees immediately in the neighbourhood of the villages. The soil, a reddish clay, is superficially covered with a quartz-gravel, and concrete masses of the same material were seen thickly scattered. The mouth of the creek was crowded with large boats, waiting to receive a lading of oil; and immense pyramids of earthen jars were disposed within and around the village, in the same manner as shot and shells are piled in an arsenal. Yanangheoum is situated in lat. 20° 28′ N., long. 94° 30′ E. The town has a mean appearance, notwithstanding its numerous pagodas, which Captain Cox describes as falling to ruins. The inhabitants, however, he says, were well dressed, and many of them had gold ear-ornaments of a spiral form. They ought to be rich, from the great trade they carry on in the earth-oil. At the time of his journey, thirty-three large boats, besides numerous smaller ones, were lying here; and thirty-three more large merchant-boats were lying at two villages a little higher up. Colonel Symes represents the place to be inhabited only by potters, who carry on an extensive manufactory, and find full employment. He found the smell of the oil extremely offensive. The nearest wells are about three miles from the river in an E.N.E. direction. The road lies through the dry, sandy channels of water-courses, and over rugged, arid downs, partially clothed with plants

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

of the euphorbium genus, the cassia-tree, which yields the *cutch*, or terra japonica, (used throughout India to add to the astringency of the betel,) and the hardy *biar* or wild plum of India. The wells in this place are 180 in number; they are scattered over the downs at irregular distances. Four or five miles to the N.E., there are 340 more. The oil or naphtha is of a dingy green, and odorous. It is used for lamps. Boiled with a little *dammer* (a resin of the country), it serves for paying the timbers of houses and the bottoms of boats, which it keeps from decay and vermin; it is also employed as a lotion in cutaneous eruptions, and as an embrocation in bruises and rheumatic complaints. It is drawn pure from the wells in the liquid state; but, in the cold season, it congeals in the open air, and always loses something of its fluidity. "It is, in fact," says Captain Cox, "a genuine petroleum, possessing all the properties of coal-tar. The only difference is, that Nature elaborates in the bowels of the earth, that for the Birmans, for which European nations are indebted to the ingenuity of Lord Dundonald."

The method of sinking these wells is ingenious. "The hill is cut down so as to form a square table of from fourteen to twenty feet for the crown of the well; and from this table, a road is formed by scraping away an inclined plane. The shaft is sunk of a square form, and is lined, as the miner proceeds, with frames of cassia-wood staves; the uppermost ones about four feet and a half square, but more contracted below. When a miner has pierced six or more feet of the shaft, a series of these frames are piled one on another, and are regularly added to at top, the whole gradually sinking as he deepens the shaft, so as to secure him against the falling in of the sides. The strata to be

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

pierced through consist of, first, a light, sandy loam, intermixed with fragments of quartz, silex, &c.; secondly, a friable sand-stone, easily wrought, with thin horizontal strata of martial ore, talc, and indurated argil; thirdly, at about twenty cubits from the surface, a pale blue, argillaceous schist, impregnated with the petroleum, very difficult to work, growing harder as they go deeper, and ending in schist and slate, such as is found covering veins of coal in Europe. Below this schist, at the depth of 130 cubits, is coal. The specimen seen by Captain Cox was mixed with sulphur and pyrites. The machinery used in drawing up the rubbish, and afterwards the oil, consists of an axle crossing the centre of the well, resting on two rude forked stanchions, with a revolving barrel like the nave of a wheel, in which is a score for receiving the draw-rope. The bucket is of wicker work covered with *dammer*. To receive the oil, one man is stationed at the brink of the well, who empties the bucket into a channel leading to a jar sunk in the earth, whence it is ladled into smaller ones, and immediately carried down to the river. When a well grows dry, they deepen it: none have been abandoned, and they would seem to be inexhaustible. Even the death of a miner from mephitic air, which sometimes occurs, does not deter others from persisting in deepening them when dry. The miners assured Captain Cox, that no water ever penetrates the earth into these wells. The rains in this part of the country are, in fact, seldom heavy, owing probably to the high range of mountains to the eastward, which arrest the clouds. During the rainy season, a roof of thatch is thrown over the wells; the waters soon run off to the river, and what sinks into the earth, is prevented from descending to any great depth by the increasing hard-

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

ness of the oleaginous strata.* The property of these wells is in the owners of the soil, and descends as a sort of entailed hereditament, with which, it is said, the government never interferes, and which no distress will induce them to alienate. One family generally possesses as many as four or five wells; seldom more. A tenth of the produce goes to the king, and one-sixth to the labourers, either in oil or in money. The average produce of each well per diem, Captain Cox estimates at 300 *viss*, or 109,500 *viss* per annum, equal to 173 tons 955lbs, or, in liquid measure, 783 hogsheads of sixty-three gallons each. And as there are 520 wells registered by government, the total produce per annum is 412,360 hogsheads; worth, at the wells, 711,750 *tecals*.† Between seventy and eighty boats, of an average burthen of sixty tons, are constantly employed in this branch of commerce.

Colonel Symes picked up near this town, several lumps of petrified wood, in which the grain was clearly discernible. "It was hard, silicious, and seemed composed of different lamina. The natives said, that the petrifying quality of the earth at this place was such, that leaves of trees shaken off by the wind, were not unfrequently changed into stone before they could be decayed by time." This whole tract seems to invite the researches of the geologist.

After passing Pengkioum, where a small river falls into the Irrawaddy, the country resumes its verdant ap-

* The coal mines of Whitby are worked below the harbour, and the roof of the galleries is not more than fifty feet from the bed of the sea.

† At the wells, it is worth 1¼ tecals per 100 *viss*. It is delivered to the exporter at the river, at two tecals per 100 *viss*, the value being enhanced three-eighths by the portage. At Rangoon, it is sold at the rate of three sicca-rupees, three anas, and six pice per 112 lb.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

pearance, and the trees shoot up with their usual vigour. The bed of the river is here very wide, being about four miles across in the dry season, but its stream is then divided into different channels by low islands of sand. On the western bank is seen the town of Sembu-ghoon, a position of great importance, as here only the lofty range of Anou-pec-tou-miou, which sweep round and enclose the province of Arracan, open and form a pass about sixty miles in length. Through this opening, all the Bengal merchandise imported into Birmah by way of Arracan, is brought, to be shipped on the Irrawaddy.* A little higher up, on the eastern side, is a large town called Pakang-yay, with several neat temples, surrounded with groves of palmyra, tamarind, and banyan-trees; here also were some heavy trading-boats. In the evening after leaving Yanangheoun, the embassy reached Sillah-miou, a large and handsome town, shaded by wide-spreading trees, and embellished with several temples. A smooth bank of the finest verdure, sloping to the river, adds much to its beauty. The soil seemed in general poor, but some fields were regularly fenced, and large herds were grazing in the neighbourhood. The *crotolaria juncea*, which yields good hemp or flax, grows here spontaneously. This town is distinguished for its silk-manufactories. The silk is brought from Yunnan in China, by way of Amarapura, in a raw state, and is returned in the web. The colours are bright and beautiful, though not very durable, and the texture is close and strong. The goods are mostly woven

* The difficulties of reaching Arracan even through this natural gap, would be almost insurmountable by any other than native troops, accustomed to jungle warfare. Accordingly, it has been deemed necessary that the Bengal army, on evacuating Henzawuddy, should retire by way of Rangoon.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

in patterns adapted to the Birman dress. At a short distance from the town are the ruins of a brick fort, erected in a very judicious situation.

The next day, they made little progress, owing to the violence of the current, which obliged the boatmen to take to their poles. The Arracan mountains appeared to the west, and a lofty conical hill, called Poupa, was in sight to the eastward. A few villages and numerous temples skirted the banks. At a place called Yoo-wa, another small river enters the Irrawaddy; and two days' journey up this river, is a large town called Yoo-miou. The district derives its name from the people called Yoo, who were represented to Colonel Symes as exceedingly ugly, having protuberant bellies and *white teeth*, a great deformity in the eyes of the Birmans, who stain their teeth, eye-lashes, and the edge of the eye-lids with black.* The Yoos are said to speak the language of Tavoy. They are subject to the Birmans, and are, like them, worshippers of Guadma. Their territory skirts the great chain of Anou-pec-tou-miou from lat. 21° to 23° N. Small barren hills now form the eastern bank, abounding with petrifactions, but relieved by fertile and well-cultivated valleys; till, after doubling a rocky point, round which the current sets with formidable rapidity, we come to the large town of Seen-ghoo, situated on a green level bank, affording a fine range of pasturage. For a great distance, small temples are built close to the river. At Kea-hoh, a poor village, which Colonel Symes reached in the evening of the third day (from Yanangheoum), the inhabitants obtain a livelihood by

* The collyrium they use is called *surma*, the Persian name for antimony. White teeth, they say, are fit only for dogs! The practice of dying the eye-lashes is common to the females of Hindostan and Persia.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

extracting molasses from the palmyra-tree, of which they make tolerably good sugar. "Although," remarks Colonel Symes, "the soil near the river is in most places unproductive and barren, yet, as we advanced northwards on the following day, population increased. Every little hill or rising ground was crowned with a temple. That of Logah-nunda is distinguished for its superior size; it is a clumsy, inelegant mass of building, elevated on a semicircular terrace; the base is painted with different colours, and the cupola is richly gilded." A little beyond appears in view the once magnificent city of

PAH-GAHN.

Of this ancient capital, celebrated in Birman history as the seat of a former dynasty,* little more

* Pah-gahn is said to have been the residence of forty-five successive monarchs, and to have been abandoned about 500 years ago, in consequence of a divine admonition. "Whatever may be its true history," remarks Colonel Symes, "it certainly was once a place of no ordinary splendour." The learned editor of Marco Polo's Travels, supposes it to be no other than the ancient capital of Mien, referred to by that Traveller in his account of the inroad made into Birmah by the Great Khan. He describes it as distant fifteen days' journey from the great plain in which the Birmans were totally defeated by the Tâtar army. The coincidence of dates is remarkable, as five centuries would place the abandonment of Pah-gahn about the period of the Mongol conquest. Amarapura did not then exist, and Ava was too near to have taken fifteen days in reaching it. Marco Polo styles the city large and magnificent. "The inhabitants," he adds, "are idolaters, and have a language peculiar to themselves. It is related, that there formerly reigned in this country a rich and powerful monarch, who, when his death was drawing near, gave orders for erecting on the place of his interment, at the head and foot of his sepulchre, two pyramidal towers, each terminating with a ball. Around the balls are suspended small bells of gold and silver, which sounded when put in motion by the wind. The whole formed a splendid object; and the Great Khan,

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

than a few straggling houses is to be seen from the river; and "in fact," says Colonel Symes, "scarcely any thing remains of ancient Pagahm, except its numerous mouldering temples, and the vestiges of an old brick fort, the ramparts of which may still be traced." Mr. Judson ascended one of the principal edifices, upwards of a hundred feet high, and he describes the view presented from the summit as extremely striking and impressive. "All the country round seems covered with temples and monuments of every sort and size; some in utter ruin, some fast decaying, and some exhibiting marks of recent attention and repair. The remains of the ancient wall of the city stretched beneath us, the pillars of the gates, and many a grotesque decapitated relic, checkered the motley scene." The ruins are stated by Colonel Symes to cover a space of ground not less than six or seven miles along the river and three miles inland. The religious edifices differ in structure from those in the lower provinces. "Instead of a slender spire rising to a great height from an extended base, the temples of Pah-gahn in general carry up a heavy breadth to very near the top, and then come abruptly to a point, which gives them a clumsy appearance.* Many of the more ancient temples are not solid at the bottom: a well-

upon being informed that they had been erected in pious memory of a former king, would not suffer them to be violated or injured in the smallest degree."

* The pyramid of Meidun near Memphis, displays the shape of the Pah-gahn temple, while that of Gheeza, if surmounted with a *tee*, would correspond precisely to that of Shoe-madoo. Both these pyramidal forms, as well as the globular structures of the Cingalese, are alike sacred to Buddha under different invocations or avatars. The variations of structure are neither accidental nor arbitrary, but imply the particular incarnation to which the edifice is dedicated.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

arched dome supports a ponderous superstructure. Within, an image of Guadma sits enshrined. Four arched door-ways open into the dome." In one of these, Colonel Symes saw a human figure erect, which, he was told, represented Guadma, and another of the same personage, lying on his right side asleep; both colossal. He supposes the erect figure, however, to be rather the Hindoo Ananda, and the recumbent one, Na-ra-yan, sleeping on the waters. A very curious and ancient temple was being repaired by order of the Engy-Teekien, at the time of Colonel Symes's return. "It was built of masonry, and comprehended several arches, forming separate domes, into which four arched porches led, that faced the four cardinal points. On each side of the doors, in recesses in the walls, were seated gigantic human figures, made of stucco, with large staring eyes, and the head protruded forward, as if to look at those who approached the threshold. These were the preternatural porters, whose power of perception is believed to be such, that they can penetrate the recesses of the heart, and discover the sincerity of devotion." The prince intended to gild this temple; and four *viss* of gold, equal to 600*l*., were already prepared for it. The art of turning well-formed arches of brick, exhibited in the more ancient temples, is now lost in Birmah; and wooden buildings have every where superseded the more substantial edifices of masonry erected by a former race of inhabitants.

Pah-gahn stands in lat. 21° 9′ N., long. 94° 35′ E., about 260 miles distant from Rangoon. A small river, named in the days of its splendour *Shoe-kieung*, the golden stream, here falls into the Irrawaddy. The modern town of Neoundah, about four miles to the north, is, in fact, a continuation of Pah-gahn, and

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

has succeeded to a portion of its honours. "On entering the town," says the Colonel, "we came into a long, narrow, winding street, about thirty feet wide; the houses were built of bamboo, and raised from the ground. This street was full of shops, containing no other articles than lackered ware; boxes, trays, cups, &c. varnished in a very neat manner, were displayed in the front of the shops; they were of various colours; some had figures painted on them, others wreaths of flowers. Leaving this street, we crossed a watercourse on a good wooden bridge, and came to the bazar, or provision-market; the green-stalls seemed to be well provided with rice, pulse, greens, garlic, onions, and fruit; there were also fresh fish, *gnapee*, and dead lizards, which latter the Birmans account a delicacy; but there was not any meat. In our progress, we passed over another bridge, and saw several streets running in parallel lines: some of these were inhabited by carriers, whose cattle were feeding on rice straw round their houses. Having reached the extremity of the town in this direction, we came upon a well-paved road, that led to the great temple named *Shoezeegoon*, to which we proceeded. On each side of the road there was a range of small temples, neglected and in ruins: the kioums, or monasteries, were in good repair, and we saw some handsome houses for the accommodation of strangers. Shoezeegoon is neither so large nor so well built as the temples at Rangoon or Pegu; the height does not exceed 150 feet; it is surrounded with a spacious area paved with broad flags, on which there are a number of smaller buildings, profusely gilded and laboriously carved. A staircase on the outside leads up to a gallery, about a third of the height of the principal temple, whence we had an extensive prospect of the

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

country, which appeared to be exceeding unproductive and barren.

" Returning by a different way, we walked through an alley occupied by blacksmiths' shops, furnished with bill-hooks, spike-nails, adzes, &c. A little further on, we saw the ruins of a street that had been consumed by fire only two days before: from seventy to eighty houses were destroyed by the conflagration. Passing through the suburbs, we came to a part where the inhabitants were employed in expressing oil from the sesamum seed: the grain is put into a deep, wooden trough, in which it is pressed by an upright timber fixed in a frame; the force is increased by a long lever, on the extremity of which a man sits and guides a bullock that moves in a circle, thus turning and pressing the seed at the same time. The machine was simple, and answered the purpose effectually. There were not less than 200 of these mills within a narrow compass. From the circumstance of the cattle being in good order, we concluded that they were fed on the seed after the oil was extracted. The land about Pagahm scarcely yields sufficient vegetation to nourish goats."

Neoundah is a place of considerable trade. Cotton, japanned wares, and sesamum oil, are the principal exports. On his return, Colonel Symes brought to at night off this place, amid a fleet of not fewer than two hundred large trading boats, moored at the bank, in waiting for their lading. Here, in proceeding to the capital, the envoy took formal possession of a royal barge which had been sent down from Amarapura for his personal accommodation, with two war-boats to row it. " The platform contained space for thirty-two rowers, sixteen on each side; but on this occasion the oars were not fastened, as it was meant

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

to be towed by the war-boats. The inside was divided into three small apartments handsomely fitted up. The roof and sides were lined with white cotton, and the floor was covered with carpets and fine mats.

After leaving Neoundah, the eastern bank rises to from eighty to a hundred feet in perpendicular height. In the face of the cliff, more than half way up, are seen apertures resembling door-ways, said to be entrances to caves formerly inhabited by hermits. The river is perpetually divided by long islands, but is still for the most part about three miles wide. After passing the towns of Sirray-kioum and Gnerroutoh, both on the eastern bank, they brought to near Shwayedong, a small but neat town, containing about 300 houses in a regular street, each with its small garden, fenced with a bamboo railing. Two monasteries and a few small temples were seen under the shade of wide-spreading trees. The country, during the latter part of the day's voyage, seemed much more fertile and populous than in the neighbourhood of Pah-gahn. Keozee, on the same side, is the only place of consequence that occurred in the next day's voyage. Near this town, the country is enclosed, and the remains of a tobacco-plantation were seen. Detached hills appeared to the eastward. They brought to at a small village called Tou-cheac, where the inhabitants acquire a livelihood by selling the *læpac*, or pickled tea-leaf, of which the Birmans are extremely fond. The plant grows in a district to the north-east of Amarapura, called Palang-miou, but is very inferior to the tea of China, and is seldom used but as a pickle.

The river is now from three to five miles in width. The country continued to improve in the appearance of culture and population. They passed on the eastern side, Kiouptaun, or the Line of Rocks, Tanoundain, a

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

respectable town, with several other smaller towns and villages, and in the evening, brought to at an island opposite Tirroup-miou, or Chinese City. This name commemorates a victory gained here over a Chinese army some centuries ago, when Pah-gahn was the seat of government. It appears to have been through many ages, a favourite object of ambition with the Chinese emperors, to achieve so desirable a conquest as that of the valley of the Irrawaddy.

About five miles above Tirroup-miou, the Kiayn-duem river, which rises in the lower range of mountains on the confines of Assam, in lat. 25° N., mingles its waters with the Irrawaddy. At its entrance, the Kiayn-duem is nearly a mile in breadth. It flows through a very fertile country, and is said to be navigable for large boats twenty days' distance from its confluence with the Irrawaddy.

In the rowers of the barge sent down from Amarapura to meet the embassy, Col. Symes was struck with a physiognomy differing much from the other boatmen, and a softness of countenance resembling the Bengalese, more than the Birman cast of features. They proved to be Cassayers who had been brought away from their native country, which lies beyond the Kiayn-duem, when the Birmans carried their predatory incursions across its stream. Above the conflux of the two rivers, the Irrawaddy has the appearance of a beautiful canal, the island to the westward, as well as the eastern bank, being well inhabited. "Numberless villages and hamlets, with farm-yards, surrounded with stacks of paddy, buffaloes, horses, and black cattle, recall to mind scenes of European husbandry, and evince the industry and plenty of the country." At Yaŭda-boo, are manufactories of

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

earthen-ware; and at the succeeding town of Summei-kioum is the greatest manufactory of saltpetre and gunpowder in the empire. Hence the royal magazines are supplied; neither gunpowder nor saltpetre is, however, suffered to be exported under any plea, nor can the smallest quantity be sold without a special license from some man in power. A creek leads up to this town. The grounds in the neighbourhood are cultivated with rice. Temples and villages now line the banks so thickly, Colonel Symes says, that it would be tedious to enumerate them. Gnameaghee is celebrated for producing the best tobacco in the empire. Many brick-kilns were burning here, preparing materials for building temples, of which there appeared to be already a sufficient number. Beyond this place occur numerous islands: some of them are wooded and cultivated, and have inhabitants. The next place of consequence is Sandaht, or Elephant Village, situated near a bend of the river, in doubling which, the boats had great difficulty in making their way against the powerful stream. It derives its name from being wholly occupied by the elephant-keepers of the royal stables. The king is sole proprietor of all the elephants in his dominions; and the privilege to ride on or keep one of these animals, is an honour granted only to personages of the very first rank and consequence. His Birman majesty is said to possess six thousand.

The next day, they passed Meah-moo, a large town on the western bank, remarkable for a manufactory of coarse checkered cotton cloth; Yapadain, on the eastern side, a town with several temples and a handsome monastery; further on, several populous villages, pleasantly situated, and adorned with well-enclosed gardens and orchards of plantain, guava, and other fruit-

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

trees; and at night reached Kioptaloun, where a large temple, surrounded with several small buildings, was the only object that merited attention. "As our distance from Amarapura diminished," says Colonel Symes, "towns and villages on each side recurred at so short intervals, that it was in vain to inquire the name of each distinct assemblage of houses. Each, however, had its name, and was, for the most part, inhabited by one particular class, professing some separate trade, or following some peculiar occupation. We were shewn a tomb erected to the memory of a person of high distinction, who had been accidentally drowned near the spot fifteen years before: it was an oblong brick building, one story high, with eight or nine doors opening towards the river. Many beautiful temples and kioums would have engaged our attention, had we not already seen such numbers, and had we not been assured that all we had viewed fell far short of those we should have an opportunity of beholding at the capital."

Late in the evening of the eighth day from Neoun-dah, they reached the lower landing-place of what was long the metropolis of

AVA.

THE scene of desolation which here presented itself, was very striking. The scattered religious buildings that yet remain, extend about two miles along the banks of the river, which are here of a moderate height and rocky. Ava (or Aungwa), says Colonel Symes, "is divided into an upper and a lower town, both of which are fortified. The lower, which is the more extensive, is about four miles in circumference; it is protected by a wall thirty feet in height, at the foot of which there is a deep and broad fosse. The upper fort

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

or citadel, about a mile in circuit, was much more compact and strong than the lower. The walls are now (1795) mouldering into decay; ivy clings to the sides, and bushes undermine the foundation, and have already caused large chasms in different faces of the fort. The materials of the houses, consisting chiefly of wood, had, on the first order for removing, been transported to the new city of Amarapura; but the ground, except where covered with bushes or rank grass, still retains the traces of former buildings and streets. The lines of the royal palace, the *lotoo*, or grand council-hall, and the spot on which the *piasath*, or imperial spire, had stood, were pointed out to us by our guide. Clumps of bamboos, tall thorns, and a few plaintain-trees, occupy the greater part of the area of this once flourishing capital. Numerous temples (on which the Birmans never lay sacrilegious hands) were dilapidating by time. It would be impossible to draw a more striking picture of desolation and ruin."

Among the religious buildings within the fort, the Shoegunga-praw has been always held peculiarly sacred. An oath of allegiance is taken in this temple by every Birman officer, on being appointed to any great public trust, whether civil or military; and the infringement of this oath, which is viewed as the most heinous crime that a Birman can be guilty of, is invariably punished with the severest tortures. A temple of much greater magnitude stands a short distance to the westward of the fort. It is named Logatherpoo-praw, and was formerly the residence of the zarado or high priest of the empire. The area on which the temple stands, is a square surrounded with an arcade of masonry; on each side are erected nine cubical towers. The temple in which the stupendous idol is placed, has an arched excavation which contains the image of Guadama,

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

seated on a pedestal in its customary position. The height of the idol, from the top of the head to the pedestal, is nearly twenty-four feet. The head is eight feet in diameter; across the breast it measures ten feet; and the hands are between five and six feet long. The pedestal, which is also of marble, is raised eight feet from the ground. The neck and left side of the image are gilded, but the right arm and shoulder remain uncovered. It was declared to be composed of one block of marble, nor could Col. Symes, on the closest inspection, observe any junction of parts.

Ava was at this period the resort of numerous thieves, who found concealment among its decayed buildings. To any one acquainted with the fickle character of Asiatic rulers, it will cause no surprise to learn, that recent accounts represent Ava as likely again to resume its ancient honours as once more the capital of the empire. Amarapura was the creation of Minderajee-praw; its streets were laid out on the same plan as those of Ava. The will of the emperor once expressed, will soon restore the old city to its former splendour, and throw back the modern capital into a similar state of neglect and ruin.

On leaving Ava, the river bends again to the northward, when the opposite city of Chagaing, and the spires, the turrets, and the lofty *piasath* of Amarapura, create an unexpected pleasure, and exhibit a fine contrast to the gloomy and deserted walls of Ava. Chagaing, on the northern side, has also been an imperial residence, and is noted in Birman history. It is situated partly at the foot and partly on the side of a rugged hill, which is broken into separate eminences; and on each summit stands a spiral temple. These temples, rising irregularly one above another to the

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

top of the mountain, forms a beautiful assemblage of objects, the effect of which is increased by their being carefully whitewashed and kept in repair. Chagaing is the principal emporium to which cotton is brought from all parts, and where, after being cleaned, it is embarked for the China market. Its scattered houses extend for three or four miles along the banks. It is very populous, and has a large share of trade. There are remains of a fort built of brick, the walls about sixteen feet high, but unimportant as to strength, being commanded by the adjacent hills. The river, when at its height, has the appearance of a vast lake interspersed with islands, in which the foundations of Amarapura seem to be immersed. Numberless boats are seen passing up and down, and the houses on the southern shore occur in such uninterrupted succession, as to appear like a continued town or the suburbs of a city.

AMARAPURA,

THE immortal city, stands on the banks of the deep and extensive lake of Tounzemahn, which communicates by a navigable channel with the Irrawaddy. The situation is particularly fine for the site of a metropolis: it was chosen by Minderajeepraw, who founded the city in 1783. To be seen to advantage, however, it should be visited when the river is at its height.* When filled by the periodical rains, the lake on the one side, and the river on the other, form a dry peninsula, on which advantageous

* Mr. Judson, who visited Amarapura in January, landed at O-ding-miou, the lower landing-place. "At our present distance of nearly four miles from the city," he writes, "(and we cannot get nearer at this season,) it appears to the worst advantage. We can hardly distinguish the golden steeple of the palace amid the glittering pagodas, the summits of which just suffice to mark the spot of our ultimate destination."

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

situation the city is built. The number and variety of the boats moving on the waters of the lake, the great expanse of water, and the lofty surrounding hills, present a most striking scene. The palace, viewed in this direction, appears a confused assemblage of buildings, glittering with a blaze of gilding. One part of it consists of a square building finished with battlements, and a flat roof, with Tuscan pilasters at the angles. It is painted white, with gilded mouldings, but is so surrounded with trees and the mean abodes of the natives, that it is very imperfectly seen from the river. The city extends for four miles along the south-eastern bank, and is filled with religious buildings of various classes. The palace is about three-fourths of a mile N. E. by N. from the extremity of the western suburbs, and the fort about one mile further. To the eastward and northward is a high range of rugged, barren mountains, distant from four to five miles. The main breadth of the river, opposite Amarapura, is about two miles. In the dry season, its bed is mostly filled with high sandy islands, then under cultivation; but they are entirely covered by the inundation, and are annually changing their form and position.

The fort of Amarapura is an exact square. There are four principal gates, one in each face, and a smaller gate on each side of the great gate, equidistant between it and the angle of the fort; twelve gates in all. At each angle of the fort there is a large quadrangular bastion, which projects considerably; there are also eleven smaller bastions on each side, including those over the gateway. A curtain extending two hundred yards, connects each bastion. Each side of the fort occupies 2,400 feet. The rampart, faced with a wall of brick, is about twenty feet high, exclusive of the

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

parapet, which has embrasures for cannon, and apertures for musketry. Small bastions project at regular distances, and the gates are massive, and guarded by cannon. Considered as an Eastern fortification, it is highly respectable, but would be insufficient to resist modern tactics. From the height and solidity of the wall, the Birmans deem it impregnable, although a battery of half a dozen well-served cannon would effect a breach in a few hours.

The southern face of the fort is washed, during the rainy season, by the waters of the lake. The houses of the city and suburbs extend along the bank as far as the extreme point of land. The houses have in general but a mean appearance from the river: they are raised on piles, with pitched roofs. Few are built of brick and mortar, except those belonging to members of the royal family. Many are of wood, with tiled roofs; others are composed of mats and bamboos, covered in with shingles or thatch. The houses of the chief persons are surrounded with a wooden enclosure. On the ridge of the roofs are ranged earthen pots filled with water, which every citizen is compelled to provide in readiness against any conflagration. The religious buildings have a very splendid appearance, owing to the unbounded expenditure of gilding on the outside of the roofs, which must cost immense sums. The gold leaf used is exceedingly pure, and bears exposure to the air for a long time without injury. The size or glue used to make it adhere, called *seesee*, is prepared from the juice of the *croton subiferum*.

On the further side of the lake, and opposite to the fort, stands the village of Tounzemahn, near which, in a tall grove of mango, palmyra, and cocoa-nut trees, a dwelling was prepared for the British embassy; and here all missions to the court

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

are detained until after their presentation to the Golden Feet.* "On entering the lake," says Col. Symes, "the number of boats that were moored, as in a harbour, to avoid the influence of the sweeping flood, the singularity of their construction, the height of the waters, which threaten inundation to the whole city, and the amphitheatre of lofty hills that nearly surrounded us, altogether presented a novel scene exceedingly interesting to a stranger."†

The population of Amarapura was estimated by Capt. Cox, in 1800, at 175,000 persons, and the houses at between 20,000 and 25,000; but in 1810, Captain Canning was of opinion, that it did not contain more than half that number, the entire city having recently been destroyed by fire. The city is divided into four subordinate jurisdictions, in each of which a

* The usage of debarring an envoy or foreign minister from entering the capital previously to his first formal presentation, has long been the established practice of both the Birman and the Siamese courts.

† The dwelling assigned to Colonel Symes was in a grove, behind which extended a smooth level plain, intersected by embankments enclosing plantations of rice. The spot was very little above the level of the lake, and the river, when it reached its utmost height, had encroached so much on the grove, as to excite the Colonel's apprehensions of inundation. "The cause of the swelling of the waters," he says, "was not apparent, as there had not fallen with us rain sufficient to produce the smallest alteration in the river. The Birmans, however, who *knew the exact limit to which it would rise*, laughed at our proposing to make arrangements for a sudden embarkation, and assured us, that within the memory of man, the floods had never surpassed a certain boundary." Nothing is more remarkable than this invariable regularity in those vast operations of nature to which these regions are indebted for their fertility, and to which it might have been expected that uncertainty must inevitably attach. In like manner the Nile, after a lapse of three and twenty centuries, still observes the same standard of sixteen cubits in its periodical rise, that was the point of plenty in the days of Herodotus.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

maywoon presides. This officer, who, in the provinces, has the powers of a viceroy, exercises in the metropolis the functions of a mayor and recorder, holding both a civil and a criminal court of judicature; he acts also as a sheriff in all capital cases, being obliged to attend in person at the execution of the culprit. The power of life and death is vested in the monarch. The examinations taken by the maywoon are, in such cases, transmitted to the *lotoo*, or grand council, by whom, after further investigation, report is made to the king. Civil suits may also be transferred from the lower courts to the *lotoo*, but at a heavy expense. There are regular lawyers, who conduct causes and plead. Eight only are licensed to plead in the *lotoo*; they are styled *ameendozaan*, and their usual fee is equal to about 16*s*. The government has moreover large profits on all suits that are brought into court. In fact, the advance which the Birmans have made in civilization, is most strikingly evinced by the resemblance which in these respects their legal and fiscal institutions bear to the enlightened system of European nations.

"In no country in the East," says Colonel Symes, "is the royal establishment arranged with more minute attention than in the Birman court." Next in rank to the princes of the blood are the *woongees*, or chief ministers of state; they are four in number, and form the grand council of state. They issue mandates to the maywoons or provincial viceroys, and control every department. To assist them in the administration of affairs, four *woondocks* are associated with them, who sit in the *lotoo* in a deliberate capacity, but have no vote. Four *attawoons*, or privy-counsellors, seem to be a sort of check upon the *woongees*: they have the peculiar privilege, not

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

enjoyed even by the *woongees* themselves, of access to the emperor at all times. Besides these grand officers of state, there are four chief secretaries, called *seredojees*, who have numerous *serees* (writers) under them; four *nakhaanjees*, who sit in the *lotoo*, and take notes of the proceedings; four *sandohgaan*, who regulate all ceremonials, introduce strangers of rank into the golden presence, and bear messages from the council to the emperor; nine *sandoxains*, or readers, attached to the *lotoo*; an *assaywoon*, or paymaster-general; a *daywoon*, or king's armour-bearer; a *chainjeewoon*, or master of the elephants; together with *woons*, or pages of the queen's household, and of that of the prince royal. Each of the junior princes has also his distinct establishment.

"In the Birman government, there are no hereditary dignities or employments; all honours and offices, on the demise of the possessor, reverting to the crown.

"The *tzaloe*, or chain, is the badge of the order of nobility, of which there are different degrees, distinguished by the number of strings or small chains that compose the ornament; these strings are fastened by bosses where they unite: three of open chain work is the lowest rank; three of neatly twisted wire is the next; then of six, of nine, and of twelve. No subject is ever honoured with a higher degree than twelve: the king alone wears twenty-four.

"It has already been noticed, that almost every article of use, as well as ornament, particularly in their dress, indicates the rank of the owner. The shape of the betel-box, which is carried by an attendant after a Birman of distinction wherever he goes, his ear-rings, cap of ceremony, horse furniture, even

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

the metal of which his spitting-pot and drinking-cup are made, (which, if of gold, denote him to be a man of high consideration,) all are indicative of the gradations of society; and woe be unto him that assumes the insignia of a degree which is not his legitimate right!*

"The court dress of the Birman nobility is very becoming: it consists of a long robe, either of flowered satin or velvet, reaching to the ankles, with an open collar and loose sleeves; over this there is a scarf, or flowing mantle, that hangs from the shoulders; and on their heads they wear high caps made of velvet, either plain, or of silk embroidered with flowers of gold, according to the rank of the wearer.† Ear-rings are a part of male dress: persons of condition use tubes of gold about three inches long, and as thick as a large quill, expanding at one end like the mouth of a speaking-trumpet; others wear a heavy mass of gold beaten into a plate, and rolled up: this lump of metal forms a large orifice in the lobe of the ear, and

* This strict observance of the laws of etiquette regulates also their domestic architecture. In constructing houses, whether temporary or permanent, the rank of the occupant determines the form and number of stages of which the roof may be composed; nor dares any subject assume a mode of structure to which he is not legally entitled: he would soon have his house pulled about his ears. Gradations of rank are indicated also by the *chattah* or umbrella. That of the emperor is white with a deep fringe, adorned with gold lace and plates; those of the princes of the blood are gilded, but without fringe; those of the *woongees* are of the same shape as the imperial one, but red instead of white; those of the tributary princes are yellow; those of the maywoons of provinces, blue. Inferior officers have black umbrellas, but supported by very long shafts. Commoners use black umbrellas, with shafts of moderate length.

† Three officers of high rank who visited Col. Symes, are described as having their caps ornamented with a wreath of gold leaves, not unlike the strawberry-leaves in a ducal coronet.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

Engd on Steel

by H. Adlard

A WOONGEE & HIS WIFE

in their dress of ceremony

A RHAHAN OR PRIEST.

Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA
Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Original from
UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

drags it down by the weight to the extent sometimes of two inches. The women likewise have their distinguishing paraphernalia: their hair is tied in a bunch at the top of the head, and bound round with a fillet, the embroidery and ornaments of which express their respective ranks; a short shift reaches to the pit of the stomach, is drawn tight by strings, and supports the bosom; over that is a loose jacket with close sleeves; round their waist they roll a long piece of silk or cloth, which, reaching to their feet, and sometimes trailing on the ground, encircles them twice, and is then tucked in. When women of condition go abroad, they put on a silk sash, resembling a long shawl, which crosses the bosom, and is thrown over the shoulders, gracefully flowing on each side. The lowest class of females often wear only a single garment, in the form of a sheet, which, wrapped round the body, and tucked in under the arm, crosses the breast, which it scarcely conceals, and descends to their ankles. Every woman, when walking, must shew great part of her leg, as what may be called the petticoat is always open in front, instead of being closed by a seam.

"Women, in full dress, stain the palms of their hands and their nails of a red colour, for which they use a vegetable juice, and strew on their bosoms powder of sandal-wood, or of a bark called *suneka*, with which some rub their faces. Men of rank wear, in common dress, a tight coat, with long sleeves made of muslin, or of extremely fine nankeen, which is manufactured in the country; also a silk wrapper that encircles the waist. The working class are usually naked to the middle, but in the cold season, a mantle or vest of European broad cloth is highly prized."

The description given by Colonel Symes of his

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

formal presentation to the Lord of all Elephants, is highly curious and interesting. Owing, as it should seem, to unfavourable impressions respecting the relative greatness and importance of the British empire, which he ascribes to foreign emissaries, and a hesitation on the part of the Birman emperor to recognise the governor-general of India in any higher character than that of a provincial governor, our envoy was at first treated with a parsimonious politeness bordering on contempt. At the first interview, the throne was vacant, his majesty not deigning to illuminate them with the golden presence. At the same time, a studied exhibition was made of the pomp and dignity of the court. An elephant was sent to convey Colonel Symes from the landing-place to the palace; but Dr. Buchanan and Mr. Wood, who were attached to the mission, were provided only with horses. The procession was arranged with due formality. After proceeding a short way, they entered a wide and handsome street, paved with brick. The houses, which were low, built of wood, and tiled, had evidently been afresh white-washed for the occasion, and were decorated with boughs and flowers. In front of each house projected a slight latticed railing of bamboo, over which were hung mats, forming a sort of covered balcony, every one of which was crowded with spectators, male and female. Boys sat on the tops of the houses, and the streets were so thronged as to leave only space sufficient for the procession to pass; but throughout this crowd, there was no disturbance or noise. Every person, as the procession came in sight, squatted down, and remained in that respectful position till it had passed. The *pagwaats*, or constables, armed with long rods, drove back those who advanced too far, but without hurting any one. The distance from the

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

landing-place to the fort, the colonel supposes to be two miles. Within the fort are the dwellings of the official persons. They passed through a market supplied with rice, pulse, and other vegetables, but saw neither meat nor fish. At the distance of two short streets from the palace, they dismounted, and proceeded on foot to the *rhoom*, a lofty hall, raised four or five feet from the ground, and open on all sides, in the centre of a spacious area, about a hundred yards from the gate of the palace. On entering this saloon, they were required to put off their shoes, and to take their seats on the carpets spread for them, with their faces towards the palace gate, awaiting the arrival of the princes of the royal family.

The prince of Pah-gahn, the junior in rank, though not in years, being born of a different mother, first made his appearance, mounted on the neck of a very fine elephant,* which he guided himself, while a servant behind screened him from the sun with a gilded *chattah*. Fifty musketeers led the way; next came a number of halberdiers, carrying spears with gilded shafts and decorated with gold tassels, followed by six or eight officers of his household, dressed in velvet robes, with embroidered caps, and chains of gold depending from the left shoulder to the right side; these immediately pre-

* Men of rank in Birmah always guide their own elephants, sitting on the neck in the same manner as the drivers do in India. Owing to this custom, they are unprovided with those commodious seats in which an Indian gentleman reposes at ease on the back of this noble beast while the guidance is intrusted to the attendant. Colonel Symes was placed in a large wicker basket, somewhat resembling the body of an open carriage, but smaller, without any seat, but carpeted, and fastened to the animal by iron chains passed round his body: the equipage was neither comfortable nor elegant. It is remarkable, that the drivers, instead of making the elephant kneel to receive his rider, guided him to a stage erected for the purpose of mounting.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

ceded the prince's elephant; another body of spearmen, with his palanquin of state, closed the procession. On entering the gate, the prince gave to an attendant the polished iron hook with which he governed his elephant, as any thing that can be used as a weapon is not suffered to be brought within the precincts of the palace, even by the emperor's sons. Soon after, the prince of Tonghoo, the next in precedence, appeared, attended by a similar suite; and then in succession, the princes of Bassien and Prome. The Engy-Teekien, or heir-apparent, came last, just as the great drum that proclaims the hours, sounded twelve from a lofty tower near the palace. He was preceded by a body guard of infantry, of 4 or 500 men, armed with muskets, and uniformly clothed and accoutred. Next came a party of Cassay troopers, in their fanciful dress and high conical caps bending backwards. They were followed by twenty or thirty men with gilded wands. Then, after eighteen or twenty officers of rank with gilded helmets, came the civil officers of the household, wearing the *tzaloe*, or chain of nobility, over their robes, and in their caps of state. The prince now appeared, borne on men's shoulders, in a very rich palanquin, but without any canopy. On each side walked six Cassay astrologers of the brahminical sect, in white gowns and white caps studded with gold stars. Close behind, servants carried the prince's gold water-flaggon and an immense gold betel-box. Several elephants and led horses, with rich housings, came after; and lastly, inferior officers and a body of spearmen, with three companies of musketeers, one clothed in blue, another in red, and another in green, closed the procession. The utmost decorum and regularity were maintained; and if, Colonel Symes observes, the parade was less splendid than imperial Delhi could

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

exhibit in the days of Mogul magnificence, it was far more decorous than that of any court of Hindustan at the present day. The whole of these processions occupied two hours.

Colonel Symes was now permitted to proceed to the *lotoo*, or grand hall of audience, where the court was assembled in all the pomp that Birmah could display. This magnificent hall was supported by seventy-seven pillars, disposed in eleven rows: the space between the pillars, Colonel S. judged to be about twelve feet, except the central row, which was wider. The roof of the building was composed of different stages, the highest in the centre. The row of pillars that supported the middle roof, was between thirty-five and forty feet in height; the others gradually diminished towards the extremities of the building, and those which sustained the balcony were not more than twelve or fourteen feet high. At the further end of the hall, a high gilded lattice extended quite across the building: in its centre was a gilded door, elevated five or six feet from the floor, which, when open, displayed the throne. At the bottom of the lattice was a gilt balustrade, in which were deposited the umbrellas and other insignia of state. The royal colour is white, and the umbrellas are of white silk bespangled with gold. Within this saloon were seated on their inverted legs, all the princes, woongees, attawoons, officers of state, and principal nobility of the Birman empire. The space between the central pillars is always left open, that the Golden Eyes may not behold any persons but from choice. In a few minutes, eight Brahmins, dressed in white sacerdotal gowns, and silk caps of the same colour studded with gold, assembled round the foot of the throne, within the balustrade, and recited a long prayer in not unpleasing recitative; this ceremony

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

lasted a quarter of an hour. When they had withdrawn, the letter from the governor-general was placed on a silver tray in front of the railing; a reader then advanced, and chanted what was understood to be a Birman translation of it, and proclaimed a list of the presents for the emperor. Some questions were now put to the envoy by a *nakhaanjee*, as from his majesty, respecting the royal family of Great Britain and the state of England; the officer withdrawing each time, to communicate the colonel's reply to the invisible sovereign.* A handsome dessert of sweetmeats, Chinese and Birman, including læpac or pickled tea-leaf and betel, was now served up in silver, china, and glass-ware. The gentlemen of the embassy tasted of a few, and found some of them very palatable. It was at length intimated, that there was no occasion for them to remain any longer; and after making three obeisances to the empty throne, they were reconducted to the saloon. Here they waited till the princes had taken their departure, the Engy-Teekien first, and the others according to their rank, and then returned to their dwelling on the island.

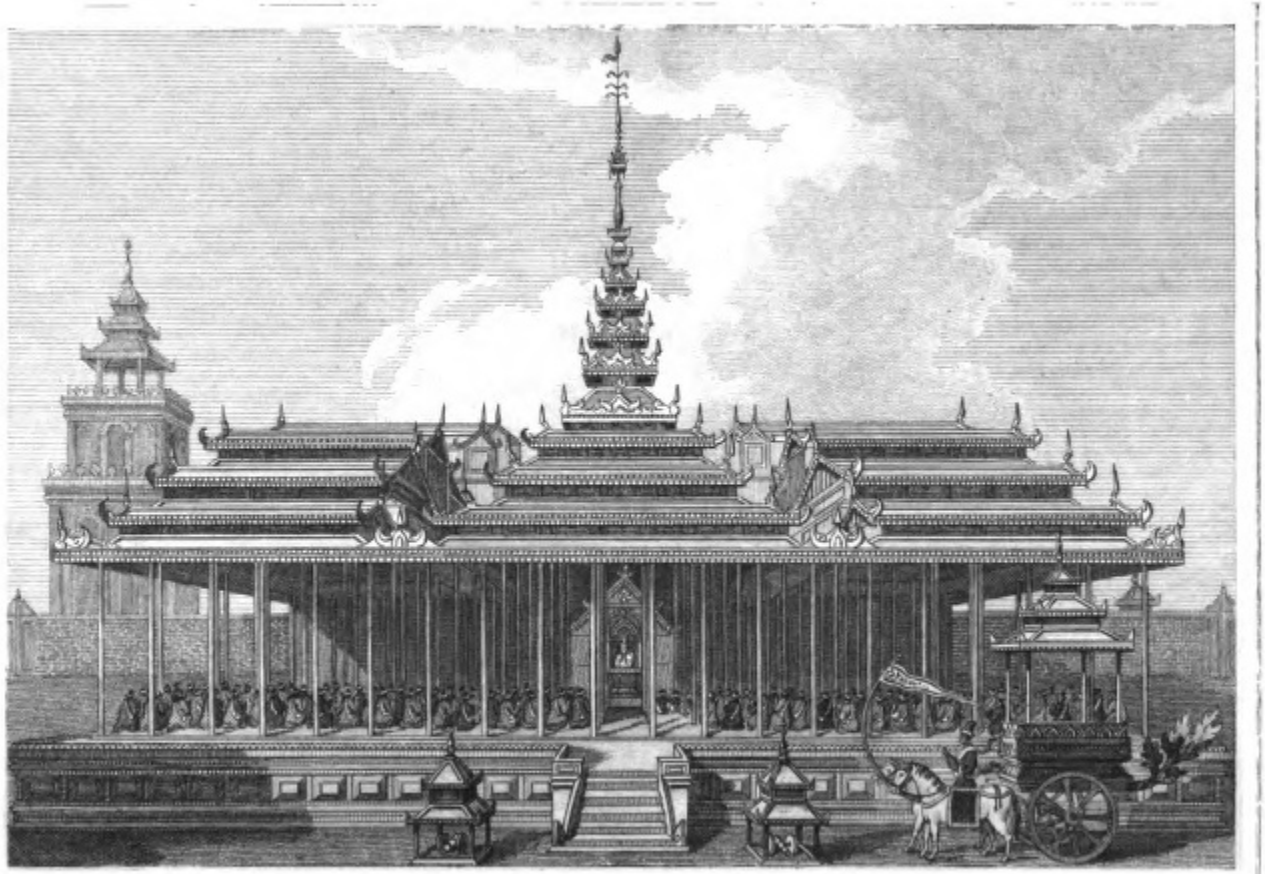
At length, the unequivocal marks of disrespect which Col. Symes received, determined him on preferring a temperate remonstrance. It had its designed effect, and his Birman majesty at length consented to receive the English gentlemen in the character of an imperial deputation. This time they were received with far more attention. Tea was served to them in the *rhoom*, and they were permitted to wear their shoes till they reached the inner enclosure that sepa-

* No inquiry whatever was made respecting the governor-general, nor, in the colonel's subsequent conversations with the princes, was his name once mentioned; but the *woongees* were anxious to draw from Mr. Wood the real extent of his authority.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

Digitized by Google

Original from
UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA



Engd on Steel

by H Adland

THE IMPERIAL COURT AT UMMERAPOORA.

A Ceremony of Introduction

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

rates the court of the *lotoo* from that of the royal palace, which no nobleman is allowed to tread with covered feet. The royal saloon of ceremony into which they were now ushered, was an open hall, supported by colonnades of pillars, twenty in length and four in depth. The basement of the throne, as in the *lotoo*, was alone visible: it was about five feet from the floor. Folding-doors screened the seat. The whole was richly gilded and carved. On each side extended a small gallery, enclosed with a gilded balustrade, a few feet in length, containing four umbrellas of state; and on two tables at the foot of the throne, were placed several large vessels of gold, of various forms. Immediately over the throne, a splendid *piasath* rose in seven stages above the roof of the building, crowned by a *tee*, from which issued a spiral rod. "We had been seated little more than a quarter of an hour," says the colonel, "when the folding-doors that concealed the seat, opened with a loud noise, and discovered his majesty* ascending a flight of steps that led up to the throne from the inner apartment. He advanced but slowly, and seemed not to possess the free use of his limbs, being obliged to support himself with his hands on the balustrade. I was informed, however, that this appearance of weakness did not proceed from any bodily infirmity, but from the weight of the regal habiliments in which he was clad; and if what we were told was true, that he carried on his dress fifteen *viss* (upwards of fifty pounds avoirdupois) of gold, his difficulty of ascent is not surprising. On reaching the top, he stood for a minute, as though to

* This was Minderajee-praw, who, "wearied with the fatigues of royalty, went up to amuse himself in the celestial regions," in 1819, after a prosperous reign of thirty-seven years, and was succeeded by his favourite grandson, the present emperor.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

take breath, and then sat down on an embroidered cushion with his legs inverted. His crown was a high conical cap, richly studded with precious stones; his fingers were covered with rings; and in his dress he bore the appearance of a man cased in golden armour, while a gilded, or probably a golden wing on each shoulder, did not add much lightness to his figure. His looks denoted him to be between fifty and sixty years old, of a strong make, in stature rather beneath the middle height, with hard features, and of a dark complexion; yet, the expression of his countenance was not unpleasing, and seemed, I thought, to indicate an intelligent and inquiring mind.

"On the first appearance of his majesty, all the courtiers bent their bodies, and held their hands joined in an attitude of supplication. Nothing further was required of us, than to lean a little forward, and to turn in our legs as much as we could, not any act being so unpolite or contrary to etiquette, as to present the soles of the feet towards the face of a dignified person. Four Brahmins, dressed in white caps and gowns, chanted the usual prayer at the foot of the throne: a *nakhaan* then advanced into the vacant space before the king, and recited in a musical cadence the name of each person who was to be introduced on that day, and of whose present, in the character of a suppliant, he entreated his majesty's acceptance. My offering consisted of two pieces of Benares gold brocade; Dr. Buchanan and Mr. Wood each presented one. When our names were mentioned, we were separately desired to take a few grains of rice in our hands, and, joining them, to bow to the king as low as we conveniently could, with which we immediately complied. When this ceremony was finished, the king uttered a few indistinct words, to convey, as I

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

was informed, an order for investing some persons present with the insignia of a certain degree of nobility: the imperial mandate was instantly proclaimed aloud by heralds in the court. His majesty remained only a few minutes longer, and during that time looked at us attentively, but did not honour us with any verbal notice, or speak at all, except to give the order before mentioned. When he rose to depart, he manifested the same signs of infirmity as on his entrance. After he had withdrawn, the folding-doors were closed, and the court broke up.

"In descending, we took notice of two pieces of cannon, apparently nine-pounders, which were placed in the court, on either side of the stairs, to defend the entrance of the palace. Sheds protected them from the weather, and they were gilded all over. A royal carriage was also in waiting, of curious workmanship, and ornamented with a royal spire: there was a pair of horses harnessed to it, whose trappings glistened in the sun."

In the outer court, Col. Symes saw the immense piece of ordnance captured at Arracan: it had been gilded and placed beneath a roof of a dignified order.*

Prior to this interview with the emperor, Col. Symes attended the levees of the Engy Teekien and the queen dowager. The etiquette observed in his visit to the prince, was much the same as in his presentation to the emperor. The saloon of audience was adorned with six rows of pillars, seven in a row; but there was neither gilding nor paint on them, such ornaments being strictly confined to the sovereign and the priesthood; and the naked pillars gave a very rude appearance to the apartment. Four Brahmin priests

* See page 42.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

chanted a prayer, that lasted a quarter of an hour; at the close of which, a window opened at the end of the saloon, and discovered the prince seated behind it, dressed in a habit that shone with gold, and with a pyramidal cap that glistened exceedingly. His head and shoulders alone were visible. He spoke not a word, and noticed no one, but sat erect and motionless like a pagod. A list of the presents was recited by a reader kneeling in front of the sofa; and after about a quarter of an hour had elapsed in this dumb interview, the shutters were suddenly closed, and they saw him no more. Subsequently, however, the prince vouchsafed to honour Col. Symes with an unceremonious reception, when, instead of merely exhibiting himself from a casement, he was seated on a richly ornamented couch, in a very simple costume: he wore a vest of white muslin, with a lower garment of silk, and his head was bound with an embroidered fillet. His manners on this occasion were frank and free from ostentation; he asked many frivolous questions, and endeavoured to amuse his visiter with the prattle of two sprightly children, his daughters.*

The interview with Medaw-praw, the queen dowager, was far more interesting. An Asiatic princess holding a drawing-room, is no ordinary spectacle. This ve-

* This prince, to whom Minderajee-praw is said to have been particularly attached, died before his father, in consequence of which his son, at that time a boy, was declared heir to the throne. His claims, however, appear to have been contested by his uncles, and his accession was the signal for the execution of the Prince of Tonghoo, with his family and adherents. The Prince of Prome also, whose daughter he had married, was thrown into prison, where he died of his wounds shortly after. "The emissaries of the new king," writes Mr. Judson, (July 1819) "are searching in every direction for the adherents and *protegés* of his deceased uncles." He was crowned on the 2d of November following.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

nerable personage appears to have been held in the highest estimation. Her sister had been the wife of the famous Alom-praw, and her daughter being espoused to the reigning monarch, she stood in the double relation of aunt and mother-in-law to Minderajee-praw. Her rank gave her precedence over all the sons of the emperor, except the heir-apparent. Col. Symes found her residing in a very handsome mansion, near the palace. "We entered the enclosure," he says, "without any of the parade observed in our former visits. At the bottom of the stairs we put off our shoes, and ascended into a handsome hall, supported by several lofty pillars; at the further end, a portion of the floor was elevated six or eight inches, and separated by a neat balustrade from the rest of the room; within this space, under a white canopy, was placed a large cushion of blue velvet fringed with gold, on a carpet covered with muslin. There was a numerous assemblage of both sexes, but particularly women, sitting round the balustrade. As soon as we entered, a space was immediately vacated for us to occupy, in front of the door and opposite to the cushion. After we had been seated a few minutes, the old lady came forth from an inner apartment, and walked slowly towards the elevated seat, supported by two female servants, whilst another held up her train; her long white hair hung loose upon her shoulders, but she wore neither covering nor ornament upon her head. Her dress, which was extremely fine, without being gaudy, became her advanced years and high dignity: it consisted of a long robe of white muslin, and over her shoulders was thrown a sash of gauze, embroidered with sprigs of gold. She advanced to where the cushion was placed, and took her seat on the carpet, supporting her head on her arm that rested on the pillow, whilst

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

the two female attendants, neatly dressed, kneeling, one on each side, fanned her with long gilded fans. Every person seemed to pay her profound respect, and when she entered, both men and women bent their bodies in the attitude of submission. I had brought, as a token of my veneration, a string of pearls and some fine muslin. The Sandohgaan announced the offering, and enumerated the articles with a loud voice, entreating, in my name, her gracious acceptance of them. She looked at the English gentlemen with earnestness, but seemed entirely to disregard the Chinese, although their dress was much more showy than ours. Her manner was on this occasion extremely complaisant, and she asked several questions, such as, what were our names? how we were in health? what were our ages? On being informed, she obligingly said, she would pray that we might attain as great a longevity as herself; adding, that she had reached her seventy-second year. I did not perceive, amongst the numerous company that attended, any of the junior princes, or of the principal ministers, although there were several personages of distinction. After she had retired, a very handsome dessert was served up: the fruits and preserves were delicious: whatever China could yield, was united with the produce of their own country. Having tasted of various dishes, we withdrew without any ceremony."

Rope-dancers, figure-dancers, musicians, tumblers, and masquerade performers, were in attendance both at the imperial palace and at the levees of the princes. The tumblers, however, appeared much inferior in agility to those of southern India.

When Captain Cox repaired to Amarapura, the emperor, with all his court, was residing at Mheghoon, a few miles higher up the river, where his

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

majesty was busily employed in erecting a magnificent pagoda. The city of Mheghoon was at this time merely "an assemblage of bamboo huts, with a few wooden houses, straggling along the western bank of the river for about two miles, under a range of high, barren hills." About the centre was a wooden palace, externally of a mean appearance, a little beyond which was the site of the intended pagoda. His majesty held his court in a large tent, about 300 feet in diameter, supported in the centre by a stout mast about sixty feet high, and the sides resting on an arcade of a hundred arches, of bamboo work, with wooden piers about fifteen feet high. "The throne, which came close to the outer edge of the tent, was an octagon of wood, like a large pulpit; each face was about ten feet; the floor elevated about six feet above the level of the tent; the sides open to the south and east, the west and north sides skreened by a curtain; the floor was carpeted, and a raised bench, covered with velvet cushions laced with gold, was placed near the centre, a little advanced to the front. Below, within the circle of the tent, was a raised seat like a clerk's reading-desk, covered with green velvet, edged and trimmed with broad gold lace, with large red velvet cushions on it, trimmed in the same manner. To the right and left of the throne, on the ground, just within the arcade of the tent, were ranged twenty of the king's body-guard, in satin gowns trimmed with gold lace, with treble scolloped capes and cuffs, and gilt hats like Mambrino's helmet. Nearer the throne, to the right or west side, were seated in a line with the body-guards, six eunuchs of the palace, native Mahommedans, in white jammas and coloured silk lungees, with white handkerchiefs round their heads. The princes of the blood, the *chobwas* (petty tributary

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

princes), and all the courtiers of superior rank, were dressed in red velvet gowns, like that worn by the maywoon; the caps of the princes and chobwas varying according to their rank, which is further denoted by the gold chains they wear. The inferior courtiers' dress and caps were made of satin trimmed with narrow gold lace, but in form the same as the viceroy's.

"His majesty was dressed in white muslin with a gold border, and had on a crown, shaped something like a mitre, about fifteen inches in height. In his hand he had a small *chowrie*, made of peacock's quills, with which he fanned away the flies. When seated, he asked in a clear and audible voice, which was the resident. The interview lasted about twenty minutes, during which the emperor made several inquiries respecting the Europeans, and at length, addressing the viceroy, said, "The weather is very warm—I must retire: take care of him."

Mr. Burnet, who attended Capt. Cox, was subsequently admitted to a still more familiar interview with his majesty in his retreat at Mheghoon. He found the king seated on a common mat on the floor of his bungalow, reclining on pillows covered with green velvet. He was dressed in an open *jamma* of white cloth, a common silk *lungee* round his loins, his hair gathered into a knot on the crown of his head, without any handkerchief. The courtiers and Mr. Burnet were arranged on the same level, but on the bare bamboos. The king's grandson came in and took his seat at his majesty's left hand, on which Minderajee-praw embraced and kissed him. The daughter of the prince of Prome, the intended wife of the grandson, seated herself on his right hand. Several of the emperor's daughters also came in, bowed to the ground, and then seated themselves opposite to his majesty.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

Mr. Burnet, though evidently noticed, was not spoken to by the emperor, whose mind was at this time wholly occupied with the changes which he meditated introducing in the ecclesiastical system of the empire,* but which, it seems, he found it impracticable or impolitic to carry into effect. A few months after, the new regulations were repealed (it is said at the intercession of the queen), and the priesthood were again admitted to his favour.

* "Among the observations that were made by him on the subject, he said, that he feared too many resorted to a religious life from a love of indolence; that he did not pretend to be learned in these matters himself, but, as the head of the religion of his dominions, it was his duty to see that those immediately intrusted with its rites were well informed; and in consequence, he gave orders that candidates for the superiority of *keoums* should in future undergo a more strict examination. His courtiers maintained a humble and profound silence, except when occasionally answering in the affirmative. It appears that his majesty is much dissatisfied with the present state of religion in his dominions, and meditates some great changes. He has found the priesthood in general miserably ignorant; even his arch-priest cannot satisfy his doubts. He says, they read over their canonical books, when they first enter on the monastic life, as a task imposed on schoolboys; and although they have no other employment to engage their attention, they never afterwards investigate or inquire into the mystical meaning of their rites; so that they are totally unfit to instruct the people. Hence the various abuses that have crept into their religion; the building of small pagodas, the use of beads, &c., all of which are cloaks for hypocrisy, and unauthorised by the tenets of their ancient faith. These he means to forbid; also the practice of the poonghees taking servants with them to carry the provisions they collect in the morning; and to restrain the number of poonghees. These severe strictures and meditated reforms alarm his courtiers very much: they dare not remonstrate, and are afraid to obey."—P. 231. It seems that Minderajee-praw was in no small degree under the influence of the Brahmin magi attached to his court. He wished to introduce an additional intercallary moon, in order to rectify the Birman calendar; but the rhahaans resisted the innovation, and in the end prevailed.—See *As. Res.* vol. vi. p. 170.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

Minderajee-praw was believed to be in heart hostile to the established religion, and his death was the signal for renewed exertions on the part of the priests. "Since the decease of the old king," writes Mr. Judson, in 1819, "the people have been more engaged than ever in building pagodas, making sacred offerings, and performing the public duties of their religion." A persecuting spirit, instigated by the rhahaans, began at the same time to manifest itself against the estimable American missionaries stationed at Rangoon, which determined Mr. Judson and his colleague to go up to the new sovereign with their memorial.* They obtained without difficulty, through the good offices of the former viceroy of Rangoon, permission to behold the golden face. "The scene to which we were introduced," says Mr. Judson, "really surpassed our expectation. The spacious extent of the hall, the number and magnitude of the pillars, the height of the dome, the whole completely covered with gold,

* We have been unable to ascertain from any document the name of the reigning emperor; a circumstance which will awaken no surprise when the Birman etiquette on this point is known. "Among the Hindus," says Dr. Buchanan, "it has never been customary to call any prince by his proper name. This custom has been communicated to the Birmans with such strength, that it is almost impossible to learn the name of any prince during his reign. His titles only can be lawfully mentioned; and the law is enforced with such rigour, that Birmans even in Calcutta shudder when requested to mention the dreadful name."—*Asiat. Res.* vol. vi. p. 264. In the letter addressed by Minderajee-praw to the governor-general (Sir John Shore), given by Col. Symes, no name occurs, but the imperial writer is designated as "the lord of earth and air, the monarch of extensive countries, the sovereign of the kingdoms of Sonahparinda, Tombadeva, Seawuttena, Zaniengnia, Soonaboomy, in the district of Hurry Mounza, in the country of Zemee, Hamaratta, Dzodinagara, &c.;" moreover, master of the white, red, and mottled elephants; with a string of other pompous and unmeaning titles. By the way, no mention is made of the proprietorship of *the* white elephant.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

presented a most grand and imposing spectacle. Very few were present, and these evidently great officers of state. We remained about five minutes, when every one put himself into the most respectful attitude, and Moung Yo whispered that his majesty had entered. We looked through the hall as far as the pillars would allow, and presently caught sight of this modern Ahasuerus. He came forward, unattended, in solitary grandeur, exhibiting the proud gait and majesty of an eastern monarch. His dress was rich, but not distinctive; and he carried in his hand the gold-sheathed sword, which seems to have taken the place of the sceptre of ancient times. But it was his high aspect and commanding eye that chiefly rivetted our attention. He strided on. Every head, excepting ours, was now in the dust. We remained kneeling, our hands folded, our eyes fixed on the monarch. When he drew near, we caught his attention: he stopped and partly turned towards us. 'Who are these?' 'The teachers, great king,' I replied. 'What! you speak Birman?—the priests that I heard of last night?—when did you arrive?—are you teachers of religion?—are you like the Portuguese priest?—are you married?—why do you dress so?' These and some other similar questions we answered; when he seemed pleased with us, and sat down on an elevated seat, his hand resting on the hilt of his sword, and his eyes intently fixed on us."

Moung Zah, the prime minister of state, now read the petition, which stated, that the American teachers had come up to behold the golden face, and had reached the bottom of the golden feet, to ask permission to preach their religion in the Birman empire, and that those who were pleased with it, whether foreigners or natives, might not be molested by the officers of go-

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

vernment, this being the only favour they had to ask of the excellent king, the sovereign of land and sea. The emperor heard the petition, and stretched out his hand. Moung Zah crawled forward and presented it. His majesty began at the top, and deliberately read it through: he then handed it back without saying a word, and took the tract which had been prepared by the missionaries as a statement of their doctrines. He held it long enough to read the two first sentences, which asserted, "that there is one eternal God, who is independent of the incidents of mortality, and that, beside him, there is no God;" he then, with an air of indifference or disdain, dashed it to the ground. Moung Yo, an officer of the viceroy, made an attempt to serve them by unfolding one of the volumes which composed their present — a Bible in six volumes, covered with gold leaf, each volume enclosed in a rich wrapper: but his majesty took no notice. After a few moments, Moung Zah interpreted his imperial master's will in the following terms: "In regard to the objects of your petition, his majesty gives no order. In regard to your sacred books, his majesty has no use for them: take them away." Something was said respecting Mr. Colman's skill in medicine, upon which the emperor once more opened his mouth and said, "Let them proceed to the residence of my physician, the Portuguese priest; let him examine whether they can be useful to me in that line, and report accordingly." He then rose from his seat, strided on to the end of the hall, and there throwing himself down upon a cushion, lay listening to the music and gazing at the parade spread before him. The missionaries subsequently learned from Moung Zah, that the policy of the Birman government, in regard to the toleration of any foreign religion, is precisely the same as that of

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

the Chinese; that there was no room to hope that any of the emperor's subjects who should embrace a religion different from his own, would be exempt from punishment; and that, in presenting a petition to that effect, they had been guilty of an unpardonable offence.*

This interview took place in January 1820. Chagrined and disheartened, Mr. Judson returned to Rangoon, and subsequently accompanied Mrs. Judson to Bengal, for the benefit of her health. In January 1821, he resumed his duties at Rangoon, under somewhat more favourable auspices. The viceroy had given unequivocal evidence of his disposition not to interfere, and had defeated the efforts of some of the native priests to injure Moung Shwa Gnoung, the most prominent among the converts. Towards the close of this year, Mr. J. was joined by Dr. Price, an American physician. In the mean time, it seems, the emperor had sometimes made inquiries respecting the American teachers, in such a manner as to awaken a hope, that another application might be more successful than the first had been; and reports of Dr. Price's medical and chirurgical skill having reached the golden ears, an order was despatched from Amarapura, requiring his attendance at the palace. Accordingly, on the 28th of August, 1822, Mr. Judson and Dr. Price, leaving the mission at Rangoon in charge of Mr. Hough, set out for the capital, which they reached on the 27th of September following. They were favourably received by the emperor,† with whom, and some of his

* Judson's Account, pp. 228—234.

† When the missionaries were presented to the king this time (Sep. 27, 1822), Dr. Price was received very graciously; but, though Mr. Judson appeared before him almost every day, the emperor did not notice him till the 1st of October, when he thus

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

chief courtiers, conversations were several times held on the subject of Christianity. After spending about four months at Amarapura, Mr. Judson returned to Rangoon, to fetch his lady, while Dr. Price remained behind, having, it appears, gained ground considerably in the emperor's favour.*

addressed him: "And you, in black, what are you? a medical man, too?" "Not a medical man, but a teacher of religion, your majesty." The emperor then asked him if any persons had embraced his religion? to which Mr. Judson replied in the affirmative. No marks of displeasure were produced by this information, but the emperor asked Mr. Judson many questions on subjects of religion, geography, and astronomy. Mr. Judson remarks, in a letter dated November 22, of that year, that he is more cordially received as a minister of the Christian religion than he had ever anticipated, and that the disposition of the emperor and his most intimate associates appeared to be characterised by toleration and candour. It was believed, that the emperor and other distinguished natives had for some time been sceptical in relation to the superstitious theology of their own country, and that this state of mind had rendered them less hostile to principles subversive of the opinions generally held sacred by the Birmans. Mr. Judson supposes that the repulse which he met with on his former presentation, was dictated as much by policy as by any other motive. The emperor had recently ascended the throne, and might fear to render the commencement of his reign unpopular by countenancing a new religion. "Besides a distinguished nobleman, who is believed to be examining the truth of the Gospel revelation in a state of feeling bordering on anxious conviction, it is thought, that the princess, who directs the education of the heir-apparent, and who is a woman of superior endowments and great influence, is also impressed with the important facts made known in the Divine system."—*Miss. Reg. Jan.* 1825, p. 48.

* "Since Mr. Judson left me," writes Dr. Price, "the king has been more familiar than ever, manifesting a desire to make my solitude as comfortable as his favour can make it. His majesty exhibits an entire confidence, and admits me near his person. His counsellors are disposed to encourage every useful art.··The king has given an order for granting me a building lot on the bank opposite Ava. The same privileges he promises to every American or Englishman. On a spot of ground, 245 cubits by 140 to 170, on the river directly opposite the palace, I have put up a bamboo

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

This unexpected turn of affairs changed the whole aspect of the Mission. No distinct promise to tolerate the Christian religion had, indeed, been given as yet by the monarch, but his affable manners awakened the sanguine expectation of ultimate success; and the emperor's own brother, some time after Mr. Judson's return to Rangoon, wrote to him in affectionate terms, requesting his speedy return to Ava, and begging him to bring with him the sacred books.*

On the 12th of December, 1824, Mr. (now Dr.) and Mrs. Judson, embarked on the river for Ava, to which the court had removed. A foreign female had never yet been introduced at the Birman court, and much curiosity was excited by the expectation of her arrival. They arrived there after "a pleasant trip" of six weeks, and found that Dr. Price had taken a native wife. The war with England, unhappily, had somewhat soured the emperor's mind against foreigners, and Mr. Judson's reception at court was rather cool. But Mrs. Judson immediately commenced her benevolent plans by opening a free school; and in January, it already contained nine boys and seven girls. Since then, up to the last accounts, no intelligence had been received from them: but a sepoy who had escaped from Ava to the British head-quarters at Prome, stated, that all the Europeans at Ava were in chains, in prison, and wholly dependent on charity for subsistence; that Mrs. Judson, however, was permitted to live at her own house, and was allowed to see Dr. Judson every two or three days.† Under few eastern

house; and as I have a royal order for as many bricks as I want, provided I take them immediately, I have thought it best to put up a brick house to accommodate one or two families."—*Miss. Reg. Jan.* 1825, p. 48.

* Judson, p. 328.

† Miss. Reg. Jan. 1826, p. 77.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

despotisms would the life and liberty of an unprotected female, in such circumstances, have been so far respected.

Amarapura, to which Minderajee-Praw gave the proud title of the immortal city, is no longer the capital of Birmah. A new palace was being erected at Old Ava in February 1824, of which, as soon as completed, the emperor was expected to take possession in due form, and this city was to be the future residence of the court. Of the transitory nature of mundane grandeur, there cannot be a more striking illustration than a Birman capital, with its wooden houses and glittering pagodas. All the magnificence which once attached to New Ava has, probably, ere this, passed away. Colonel Symes describes several very handsome edifices. One of the most interesting was the *Piedigaut-tiek*, or royal library,—a large brick building, raised on a terrace, at the north-west angle of the fort, close to a very handsome monastery. It consisted of one square room, with an enclosed verandah running round it. The room was locked, and could not be opened without a special order; but the librarian assured Col. Symes that there was nothing in the inside different from what he saw in the verandah, where about a hundred large chests, curiously ornamented with gilding and japan, were ranged against the wall. The books were regularly classed, and the contents of each chest were inscribed in gold letters on the lid. The librarian opened two, and shewed Colonel Symes some very beautiful writing on thin leaves of ivory, the margins ornamented with flowers of gold. Some were in the Pali language. "If all the other chests were as well filled as those that were submitted to our inspection," remarks the colonel, "his Birman majesty may probably possess a more

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

numerous library than any potentate from the banks of the Danube to the borders of China."

The *kioum-do-gee*, or royal convent, is described as an edifice not less extraordinary from the style of its architecture, than from the magnificence of its decorations. "It was composed entirely of wood. The roofs, rising one above another in five distinct stories, diminished in size as they advanced in height, each roof being surmounted with a cornice curiously carved and richly gilded. The body of the building, elevated twelve feet from the ground, was supported on large timbers driven into the earth after the manner of piles, of which there were probably 150 to sustain the immense weight of the superstructure. The inside was most splendid. A gilded balustrade, fantastically carved into various shapes and figures, encompassed the outside of the platform. Within this, there was a wide gallery, that encompassed the entire circuit of the building. An inner railing opened into a noble hall, supported by colonnades of lofty pillars: the centre row was at least fifty feet high, and gilded from the summit to within four feet of the base, which was lackered red. In the middle of the hall there was a gilded partition of open latticed work, fifteen or twenty feet high, which divided it into two parts from N. to S. The space between the pillars varied from twelve to sixteen feet; and the number, including those that supported the galleries, appeared not fewer than a hundred, which, as they approached the extremities, diminished in height, the outermost row not exceeding fifteen feet.

"A marble image of Guadma, gilded, and sitting on a golden throne, was placed in the centre of the partition; and in front of the idol, leaning against one of the pillars, we beheld the seredaw (or zarado)

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

sitting on a satin cushion, encompassed by a circle of rhahaans, from whom he could be no other ways distinguished, than by his preserving an erect position, while the others bent their bodies in an attitude of respect, with their hands joined in a supplicating manner."

On taking leave of the primate, Col. Symes proceeded along a wide road leading to the northward, which soon brought him to an extensive plain, reaching in an uninterrupted level to the foot of a range of mountains ten or twelve miles distant. The soil is a poor clay, and the pasturage very indifferent. At a distance were seen some fields of grain; and they were told, that capacious reservoirs had been constructed with great labour and expense, by order of the emperor, in the vicinity of the mountains, which enabled the inhabitants of the low countries to irrigate the grounds, and render them productive in a season of drought. "Several kioums and villages were scattered over the plain; but," continues Col. S., "when we had advanced about two miles, the religious edifices increased beyond our power to calculate the number.

"The first that we entered was called *Knebany Kioum*, or the kioum of immortality, from the centre of which rose a royal piasath to the height of 150 feet: the roofs were of the customary structure, diminishing in stories. This is the place where the embalmed bodies of the deceased seredaws are laid in state. The building rests on a terrace of brick, and is not elevated on pillars as the kioums usually are. The hall was very handsome, about seventy feet square; the roof sustained by thirty-six gilded pillars, the central one forty feet in height. Mats were spread in different parts for the repose of the rha-

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

haans, and on each was placed a hard pillow; there was also a tray containing books on the duties of rhahaans, on religion, and the forms of worship.

"The next kioum that we visited, was the ordinary residence of the seredaw: it far exceeded in size and splendour any that we had before seen, and is perhaps the most magnificent of its kind in the universe. It is constructed entirely of wood, and resembles, in the style of its structure and ornaments, that in which we had an interview with the seredaw, but is much more spacious and lofty. The numerous rows of pillars, some of them sixty feet high, were covered with burnished gilding; and the profuse expenditure of gilding, as well on parts exposed to the weather, as on the inside, cannot fail to impress a stranger with astonishment, although he may not approve of the taste with which it is disposed. This kioum was also divided by a partition. There was a small room on one side, made of gilded boards, which we were told was the bed-chamber of the seredaw. Mats were spread on the outside for the attendant rhahaans. The figure of Guadma was made of copper, and a European girandole of cut glass stood before his throne:

"Leaving this building, we passed through many courts crowded with kioums and smaller temples. Several gigantic images of Rakuss, the Hindoo demon, half beast, half human, made of brass, were shewn as a part of the spoils of Arracan. From these we were conducted to a magnificent temple, which is erecting for the image of Guadma brought from the same country. The idol is made of polished brass, about ten feet high, and sitting in the usual posture, on a pedestal within an arched recess; the walls are gilded and adorned with bits of coloured mirrors disposed with much taste. Peculiar sanctity is ascribed to this

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

image, and devotees resort from every part of the empire to adore the Arracan Guadma. This temple, with its auxiliary buildings, promises to be the most elegant in the empire. The *chounda*, or place of reception for strangers coming from a distance to offer up their devotions, is also a beautiful specimen of Birman architecture. It comprehends five long galleries separated by colonnades, each consisting of thirty-four pillars, or two hundred and four altogether: the two central rows are about twenty-five feet high, but the external ones do not exceed fourteen feet. They are painted of a deep crimson ground, enlivened by festoons of gold leaf encircling them in a very fanciful and pleasing manner. The ceiling is embellished with a profusion of carved work, executed with great labour and minuteness. The whole length is five hundred and seventy feet, and the breadth of each distinct gallery about twelve feet, the central one, as usual, being rather wider than the others. A low railing extends along the outer pillars, to prevent improper persons and dogs from defiling the place. It is built upon a terrace of brick, elevated three feet from the ground; and the floor is made of *chunam*,—a fine stucco composed of lime, pounded steatites, and oil, forming a hard and smooth surface that shines like marble. Our conductor informed us, that this edifice had been lately erected at the sole expense of the senior *woonjee*."

The new pagoda which Minderajee-praw was erecting at Mheghoon in 1797, appears, from Captain Cox's description, to have been, at least in its design, one of the most singular and imposing edifices in this land of pagodas. It stands on a small natural mound, the sides of which have been cut down and faced with masonry, the terraces being left of the common soil, a

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

sandy loam mixed with shingle. The first terrace is about fifteen feet above the level of the river in the rainy season. "Immediately within the verge of the first terrace, on either side of the steps, are two colossal figures of lions, or rather sphinxes, couchant. They are of brick masonry, raised on pedestals of the same materials. The height of the figures is fifty-eight (Birman) cubits, and, with their pedestals, sixty cubits, or ninety-five English feet. The body and limbs are of proportionate magnitude. The eyes and teeth are of alabaster;* the eye-ball is thirteen feet in circumference. Six terraces rise one above the other, their parapet walls equidistant, the faces of good brick masonry, with stone spouts, ornamented with sculptured alligators' heads, to carry off the water. On a seventh terrace stands the plinth of the pagoda. Within this plinth, a hollow chamber is left, forming a quadrangle of sixty-one feet, its depth eleven feet, and the walls are nearly thirteen feet thick. The interior of the chamber is plastered with white *chunam*, and decorated with painted flowers and pannelled compartments with trees and flower-pots in them. There are also rows of columns, twenty-nine inches square, and pilasters, to support the leaden beams and terrace with which the whole is to be covered when the dedicated treasures are deposited there; with a number of quadrangular compartments, large and small, from ten feet to four feet five inches square, to contain them: the smaller ones are lined with plates of lead three fourths of an inch thick. The innermost quadrangles are intended for the preservation of the treasures dedicated by his majesty, while the space around them is devoted to the oblations of his courtiers. Opposite each of the smaller compartments, whose depth

* The idol Guadma in the British Museum exhibits a specimen of the alabaster eye.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

is equal to that of the larger ones, and which appeared like so many wells, were placed, on small Bengal carpets, little hollow temples, three feet square, with pyramidal roofs ornamented in the Birman style; the interior frame being of painted wood, covered with thin plates of silver, alloyed to about fifty per cent standard; in height, from the base to the pinnacle, seven feet; the eaves ornamented with strings of red coral, about six beads in each, terminated with heart-shaped pieces of common window-glass. Round the solid part of the building and upon the terrace were arranged piles of leaden beams, about five inches square, and of sufficient length to cover the respective chambers, with plates of lead of the same length, fourteen inches broad and three fourths of an inch thick, for the coverings; and besides these, a number of slates of a schistous granite were arranged in readiness to cover the whole. We were told that there was another set of chambers of the same dimensions and structure, charged with treasure, below these: how true this is, I cannot pretend to determine. The invention of lining the chambers with lead for the preservation of the treasures, is an honour claimed by his present majesty, who has great skill in these matters."

"The dedicated treasures were arranged on the platform of a bamboo shade, about seventy feet in length, and thirty broad; they consisted of a great variety of Birman temples and kioums in miniature, covered with plates of fifty per cent. silver, and filled with little images of their idols, from three inches to a foot in height, of the same materials. Besides those in the temples, &c., there were squadrons of others of the same kind and quality arranged on the floor; also many which they said were of solid gold, but, on examination, we found them less valuable; there were also two rows of about a dozen larger images of ala-

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

baster, from four to two feet in height, well gilded and burnished. Their cast of features and hair were precisely that of the Abyssinian negroes.* There were also several flat caskets of gilt metal, said to contain gold and precious stones, several piles of bricks, slabs of coloured glass, white *chattahs*, and lastly, an apparatus for impregnating water with fixed air. On the opposite side, in another shade, was an idol in a portable temple, with poles for four bearers; which, we were informed, were sufficient when its godship was in good humour; but when displeased, not all the power of the Birman empire could move it. In a separate shade, in a moveable wooden house that travels on wheels, is a print of the foot of Guadma on a slab of marble; the impression is about three feet in length."

A short time before Captain Cox visited Mheghoon, a silver mine had been discovered by a Chinese a little higher up, which was *said* to yield forty per cent, but he did not visit it. There are cliffs of a very fine limestone, of which he obtained specimens.† The hills on the western side of the river, which commence at Chagaing, terminate about sixteen miles above

* Captain Cox remarked, that the four colossal gilded images of Guadma standing on a lotos-flower in one of the principal pagodas at Pah-gahn, have all the crisped hair. The priests pretend, that when Guadma assumed the religious habit, he cut off his hair with his sword, leaving it rugged or furrowed. "The features of a genuine Birman," Captain C. adds, "have a good deal of the Caffre cast."—p. 416.

† Near Chagaing also, Captain Cox noticed a white limestone marble. On some of the spars he found the stones variegated, black, blue, green, and red, mixed with silicious and quartzose pebbles and fragments; also those calcareous stalactites called in India *couker*. The whole range appears to be metalliferous. He met with nothing but iron ore; but silver, copper, and lead, as well as precious stones, are stated to have been obtained from different parts.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

Mheghoon, where commences a high plain, rugged, and in general uncultivated, if not unsusceptible of cultivation. Only one considerable village occurs in the interval on the western bank. The eastern range of mountains continues to extend along the river as far as has hitherto been explored. Mr. Burnet, Capt. Cox's interpreter, ascended as high as Keoun-meoun, about forty-six miles above Amarapura. The course of the river is nearly north and south, with a very slight inclination from the east of north to S.W. by S. Monchaboo is about eight miles inland to the west of Keoun-meoun, in lat. 22° 40′ N., long. 96° 20′ E. To the N. of Monchaboo, there is reported to be a lake of very considerable extent, called Nandokando; but no European has hitherto penetrated thus far into the interior.

Of the northern and eastern extremities of Ava, scarcely any thing is known. The town of Bamoo, situated on the Irrawaddy, in lat. 24° N., long. 96° 56′ E., is only twenty miles from the Chinese frontier. Here, as in the days of Marco Polo, there is a *jee*, or mart, attended by the Chinese merchants. The governor of the district informed Col. Symes, that the road from the frontier to Manchegee or Yun-nan, lies over high mountains. He had been twice by this route to Pekin, and was upwards of three months performing the journey. During the last thirty days, he travelled in a boat on canals and rivers.

Above Bamoo, still ascending the valley of the Irrawaddy, is the *Bong* district, reaching to Assam on the north, Yun-nan on the east, and Cassay on the west. The Bong mountains are inhabited by a wild tribe, called by the Cassayers, *Koukies*.*

* For an account of this rude mountain tribe, who are all hunters and warriors, see Asiat. Res., vol. vii. p. 183.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

ASSAM

Consists for the most part of a long valley, about seventy miles in average breadth, and nearly 700 miles in length, divided through its whole extent by the Brahmapootra into nearly equal parts. It is situated principally between the 25th and 28th parallels of N. latitude, and between 94° and 99° of E. longitude, and contains probably an area of 60,000 square miles. It is known to be very thinly peopled, owing to the incessant warfare carried on by the petty rajahs against each other.* Seven-eighths of the country are said to be overgrown with jungle, though the soil is extremely fertile; the climate is consequently most pestilential. Owing partly to this circumstance, every attempt to conquer this country had proved abortive, prior to the Birman invasion in 1817. Hossein Shah, nabob of Bengal, once attempted it, but the rainy season intercepted his supplies, and all his army perished. Mahommed Shah, Emperor of Hindostan, invaded Assam with 100,000 cavalry, and was never heard of more. The Emperor Aurungzeb was equally unsuccessful. His general, Mourzum Khan, penetrated as far as Gergong, the capital; but, when the rains began, the Assamese came out from their hiding-places, and harassed the invaders, while sickness broke out, and the flower of the army perished. The rest endeavoured to escape along the narrow causeways which have been formed over the morasses, but few ever reached Bahar. After this expedition, the Mohammedans of Hindostan declared that Assam was inhabited only by infidels, hobgoblins, and devils. Yet, in spite of all obstacles, in

* In 1801, the population was estimated at 493,000 souls.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

1817, the Birmans succeeded, under Minderajee-praw, in acquiring entire possession of the country.

The general appearance of Assam is that of a number of irregular, insulated hills, at short distances, clothed with trees and verdure to their very summits, while to the north and east, lofty mountains rise abruptly, like a wall, to the height of from 5 to 6000 feet above the adjacent plains. On the S.W., a less elevated range separates it from Sylhet, and, extending southward through Cachar, forms the bold and lofty sweep of the Anou-pec-tou-miou. The western mountains, and part of those to the north, are inhabited by a fierce race consisting of two tribes, the *Abors* and the *Meshmees*, of whom little is known. The latter extend down to the eastern hills, and mix with the *Sing-fos*. These formerly consisted of twelve tribes; and about forty years ago, the poverty of their native soil, and the fertility of the plains of Assam, induced the Sing-fos to settle in the plains, which they cultivated by means of Assamese captives, whom they carried off from the southward. At the commencement of the late campaign, there are supposed to have been about 15,000 of these Assamese vassals held in bondage: the greater part have been already liberated by the British.* In these Sing-fos, we may recognise a Birman tribe subjecting a native race of Carayns.† From similar beginnings, doubtless, arose the empire of Ava.

The mountainous country extending from Sylhet to the plains of Assam, and from about half way between Laour and Doorgapore eastward to Cachar, is inhabited by the people called Cossyahs (or Cassayers),

* Asiat. Journ., vol. xxi. p. 495.

†. In the word *Sing*, we have evidently the distinguishing appellation of the warrior caste. See p. 97.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

but who are said to denominate themselves *Khyee*. They are described as a handsome, muscular race, active and martial; they always go armed, in general with a bow and arrows, a long sword, and a large shield. Their language is said to differ entirely from that of the Garrows, Cacharrees, and other surrounding tribes, who speak various dialects of an original common tongue; and they are distinguished from them by their physiognomy, not having that peculiar conformation of the eye-lid which forms the characteristic feature of those tribes, in common with the Indo-Chinese and Chinese nations. In religion, they are to a certain extent Hindoos: their laws of inheritance are similar to those of the Nairs, estates and governments descending to the sister's son. Their most powerful rajahs are those of Chyram, Sooloong, and Jyntah.* These Cassayers of the mountains, however, can hardly be the same race that are usually known under that name, inhabiting the district called Meckley, who in Bengal go by the name of Muggaloos, but who are said to call themselves *Moitay*.† The Cassayers of

* See Narrative of a Journey from Sylhet to Assam, by Mr. David Scott, Asiat. Journ., vol. xix. p. 259.

† Cospoor is generally considered as the capital of Cachar, or Cosari, which is made to lie between Assam on the north, Tipperah and Sylhet on the west, and Cassay on the east and south; but its dimensions, we are told, are uncertain. (See HAMILTON'S *Gazetteer*.) The fact appears to be, that Cachar, Cosari, Cassay, and Kathee, are the same word differently articulated. Cospoor (Caspura) is evidently the town of the Cassays, with which Cacharrees must be considered as synonymous. The true distinction is between the mountaineers (*Khyee*), and the equestrian tribes (*Moi-tay*). A water communication is said to exist between Cachar (Cassay) and Assam. In 1774, Oundaboo, the general of Shembuan, marched against the rajah of Cachar (Cospoor), whose country is described as to the N.W. of Munnipore. "In his advance, he overcame Anoup Singh, prince of a country called Muggeloo, and advanced within three days' march of Cospoor. Here he was opposed by the

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

Munnipora, to whom the Birmans are said to give the name of *Kathee*, are horsemen and gunsmiths, and, like the Assamese, people of the plains. Munnipora (the town of jewels), situated, according to the maps, in lat. 24° 20′ N., long. 94° 30′ E., appears to stand on one of the heads of the Kiayn-duem river, in the midst of a district liable to inundation in the rainy season.* It was captured by the Birmans in 1774. An intercourse subsists between this town and Assam, and the road would seem to be passable at some periods for cavalry; although our troops have found great difficulty in approaching it from Cachar. A few months, however, will clear up the uncertainty which at present hangs over the topography of these regions.†

confederate rajahs of Cospoor and Gossain; and his troops being attacked by the hill fever, his army was dispersed and destroyed." A second expedition was more successful, and the Cachar rajah averted the invasion, when the army had reached the pass of Inchamutty, by consenting to pay, besides a sum of money, an annual tribute of a maiden of the royal blood, and a tree with the roots bound in the native clay. Col. Symes, in 1795, witnessed the arrival at Amarapura of this degrading tribute. In like manner, Xerxes demanded that the Greeks should prove their submission by sending to him earth and water in token of vassalage.

* From April to December, the whole country is said to be one entire pool.—*Asiat. Journ.*, vol. xx. p. 484.

† In 1794, the British detachment which went to Gergong, saw there a body of cavalry which had arrived from Munnipore. By what route they had reached Assam, does not appear to have been ascertained. According to the report of a Mr. Mathews, between Doodputly in Cachar and Munnipore, there are no fewer than seven distinct ranges of hills to be traversed; and the pathway is described as leading, in some places, up rocks almost perpendicular. The first range, a continuation of the Garrows, is inhabited by the Nagahs, who are described as living in a state of rudeness bordering on savage life; they are perfectly naked, dwell in small villages strongly stockaded, and subsist chiefly on swine's flesh, as the hills afford little soil susceptible of cultivation.—*Asiat. Journ.*, vol. xx.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

The vegetable and animal productions of Assam are nearly the same as those of Bengal, which country it resembles in its physical aspect and its multitude of rivers. In its mineral treasures, however, it is far richer, almost all the smaller streams being auriferous. In the number of its rivers it exceeds every other country of equal extent.* Including the Brahmapootra and its two great branches, the Dehing and the Looichiel, sixty-one have been ascertained to exist, of which thirty-four flow from the northern, and twenty-four from the southern mountains. The latter are never rapid. The inundation commences from the northern rivers, filling both the Brahmapootra and the southern rivers, so that the water has no considerable current till May or June. In May, the inundations are usually at their height; and on their subsiding, the most luxuriant vegetation bursts forth. The source of the Brahmapootra (or Burrampooter) has never yet been explored. Recent accounts, however, in contradiction to the received theory, place its primary source not far from those of the Irrawaddy, which is represented as flowing down the opposite side of the same mountain to the plains of the Bor Khangty country, and running nearly south to Ava.†

p. 484. In the vicinity of the Garrows (or Garudas), according to Dr. Leyden, there is a tribe called *Hajin*, who worship the tiger, and offer human flesh to their carnivorous idol. This ferocious race, as well as the Nagahs, seems to bear a resemblance to the Papuas and Haraforas of the Andaman Islands, Sumatra, and Borneo.—See Dr. LEYDEN'S *Dissertation on the Indo-Chinese Nations*. *Asiat. Res.*, vol. x. pp. 217, 220, 272.

* Many of these rivers are remarkable for their extremely sinuous course. The Dekrung, though it flows through a tract of only 25 miles, has a winding course equal to 100 miles before it falls into the Brahmapootra. This river is particularly famous for the quality as well as quantity of its gold.

† Asiat. Journ., vol. xxi. p. 491.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

Other statements make the Irrawaddy communicate with a branch of the Brahmapootra. This would seem to sanction the old notion that prevailed when Count Buffon wrote, of "a lake *Champé*, giving rise to the two great rivers which water Assam and Pegu."

The whole of Assam is now in full possession of the British. On the 1st of February, 1825, the fort of Rungpore, which commands the capital, surrendered to the British forces under Lieut.-col. Richards; and all the Birmans, in pursuance of the terms of capitulation, subsequently evacuated the Assamese territory.

To the south of Bamoo, extending in fact along the western shores of the Thaluayn-meet, from where it enters Birmah from Yun-nan, to the city of Junsalaen (Yun-saluain ?), on the frontiers of Martaban, is the mountainous region called Mrelap-shan. In these mountains are found the sapphire and ruby mines: they are stated to be also rich in the precious metals. The principal ruby mines are near the town of Momeit, in lat. 23°, and at Mogouk-kiap-pyaya, some leagues further south. At Boduayn, a considerable place to the south-eastward of Momeit, not far from the Chinese frontier, are mines of gold and silver. They are chiefly worked by Chinese, under the crown. Extensive tracts in this quarter are covered with vast forests of the *læpac*, or tea-tree. Great part of this district formerly belonged to the Chinese, and was wrested from them, in 1767, by Shembuan-praw.*

* See p. 43. Col. Francklin says: "The whole produce of the ruby mines, (in which sapphires, topazes, emeralds, and garnets are found jumbled together,) does not amount to more than 30,000 tecals per annum; at least, what are permitted to be sold, the most valuable being appropriated to the king, and locked up in his treasury. Mining, every where a dangerous speculation, is here particularly so: the Chinese and Shans are in general the adventurers." Neither Col. Symes nor Capt. Cox, however, saw any

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

Throughout this region of forests, various tribes of Carayns, nominally tributary to Birmah, maintain substantially their independence under their native *chobwahs* or chieftains. On the eastern side of the Thaluayn is the country of the Lowa-yayn and Yun-shan, formerly comprehended in Siam, into which no modern European traveller is known to have penetrated.

It only remains briefly to notice the maritime province of

ARRACAN.

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, Arracan was the seat of a powerful monarchy, and the Roman Catholics had established a mission in the capital. Towards the close of the last century, as stated in our historical sketch, it was annexed by conquest to the Birman empire. In 1825, it yielded to the arms of the British. The capital is the only place, apparently, of much importance or interest; and of this we are only able to give an imperfect description from the details furnished by the periodical press.

"The city of Arracan presents a very peculiar ap-

emeralds in Birmah. All precious stones go under the same name, being distinguished only as blue, violet, or yellow rubies. Tavernier, speaking of the rubies of Pegu, says: "Among all the stones that are there found, you shall hardly see one of three or four carats that is absolutely clean, by reason that the king strictly enjoins his subjects not to export them out of his dominions; besides that he keeps to himself all the clean stones that are found. So that I have got very considerably in my travels, by carrying rubies out of Europe into Asia; which makes me very much suspect the relation of Vincent Le Blanc, who reports that he saw in the king's palace rubies as big as eggs."—*Travels*, part ii. b. 2, c. 16. Among the imperial titles of Minderajee-praw, one was, Proprietor of all kinds of precious stones, of the mines of rubies, agate, gold, silver, amber, &c. &c.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

pearance. It is built upon a plain, or it may be called a valley, about four miles in circumference, of a quadrangular form, and entirely surrounded with hills, some of which are 500 feet high. The plain itself is hard and rocky; it is intersected by divers *nullahs* and streams, which occasionally join each other and fall into the river. Some of them rush with violence through chasms and fissures in the rock, and one flows directly through the city, which is thus divided into two parts, connected by means of strong and clumsy wooden bridges. This stream ebbs and flows with the tide, and at high water, boats are able to navigate it. These nullahs are off-shoots, as it were, of a stream which separates from the great river *Mahatti*, and traverses the plain in which the city stands. As the site of the city is thus pervaded by water, it is overflowed during the rains; consequently, the houses are raised upon piles, or strong posts of timber. These houses, or rather huts, are miserable structures, little more than four feet from the ground, composed of bamboos or timber, thatched with straw or mats, and only one story high. They are ranged with considerable regularity in streets: the principal street is on each side of the stream which runs through the city. The number of houses is nearly 19,000. Reckoning five persons to a house, the number of inhabitants in Arracan, before its capture by our troops, must have been about 95,000; and this estimate is said to be below the truth. Many of the houses (perhaps nearly half) are now unroofed or damaged, and some are burned. A considerable space was obliged to be cleared, to allow of commodious buildings for the accommodation of our troops during the wet season. Although many of the inhabitants have returned, the native population of the city does not now exceed 20,000, a

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

large proportion of whom are priests, who were almost the only residents when our army entered the place, which presented a singular spectacle, from its marks of recent populousness, and its then stillness and aspect of desolation.

"The most curious object within the city, is the ancient fort (the only building of durable materials in the place), which is surrounded with three quadrangular concentric walls, each about twenty feet high, and of considerable thickness. They are formed of large stones, put together with great labour, and are evidently of some antiquity. Those parts which are decayed, have been repaired by pieces of timber being inserted in the interstices. The outer wall is partly natural, and of considerable extent. The inner space is the citadel, where resided the governor, the public officers, &c.; and here also were situated the public granaries. The distance between the walls varies in different places; sometimes being about 100 feet, and sometimes not half so much. Upon the whole, this remnant of the power of the ancient kingdom of Arracan is highly deserving of attention.

"The heights which surround the city are covered with pagodas, the gilded spires of which, shooting up from every pinnacle around, and glittering in the sun, contribute greatly to the singular and picturesque appearance of the place. Upwards of sixty of these temples, the shapes of which are various, can be counted at once: each contains an image of Gaudama. Many of these buildings disclose subterranean passages, which deserve exploring. The architecture of the temples in this country is curious. Although the style has no pretensions to real taste, it is not unsightly; and some of the porticoes of the better sort of

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

pagodas are handsome. There is a profusion of gilding and painting in most of them: even marble is often covered with gold leaf. Sometimes a deception is practised, as in English architecture, where humble stucco assumes the character of a more costly material: wooden pillars are occasionally coated with a sort of composition or cement, which gives them the appearance of dark marble. Independently of the fort, the temples are the only stone or *pucka* buildings about Arracan; and without them, this capital of an extensive province, once an independent state, would only deserve the name of a large but very beggarly village."

The following paragraph is from the diary of Dr. Tytler, now in Arracan:—

"The *Baboo Deeong* is one of the most remarkable hills included within the boundaries of this extraordinary city. It is situated in a direction nearly due west from the entrance where the army gained admission, subsequently to the escalade which was so gallantly executed by the troops under the command of Brigadier Richards; and is surmounted by four pagodas, dedicated to the worship of Gaudma, Saca-moonee, Simoonee, Maha-moonee, or Buddha. Leading to those edifices are several flights of steps ascending the eastern face of the hill, which are ornamented with colossal figures of deformed giants, composed of brick-work, and plastered with *chunam*, of an uncouth shape, brandishing clubs in their hands; and what is extremely remarkable, figures of the Egyptian sphinx present themselves close to the temples; and which are so constructed as to exhibit an acute triangle; two lions' bodies being conjoined to a single female head, placed at the sharp angle of the building. The Baboo

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

Deeong hill is about 100 feet in height, and is composed of strata of schistus: it is completely surrounded with water even when the tide is ebb.

"Surrounding the outer wall of one of the principal and most ancient of the Arracan temples, is observed amongst the weeds and jungle, which in many places obscure those interesting relics, a series of very surprising mutilated sculptures, placed in interstices resembling embrasures, constructed in the ruined wall enclosing the court of the temple. Upon one of those stones is sculptured the Tauric man, or Bucephalus Siva, the Mithra of the Persians, or, in other words, the sun in Taurus. Another distinctly exhibits the Sphinx, consisting of the bust of a woman attached to the body and feet of a lion, or the solar luminary having passed Leo and entered Virgo. The dragon's head and tail, shewn in the headless volume of an immense snake's body, are conspicuous upon another stone in the series. Another contains a groupe apparently comprising the crow and Sagittarius, and representing a man aiming with an arrow at an evident figure of a raven. Another exhibits a woman seemingly in the act of striking a sleeping man with a stone; which representation I take to form an allusion to the sun leaving Virgo, (under the figure of a man slain by a woman, and perhaps mixed up with a perversion of the historical fact of Jael and Sisera,) and entering Libra, the first of the lower or southern signs, and thus, slain by Virgo, or the woman, becoming *dead* and *cold* to the inhabitants of the *northern* hemisphere. I imagine the whole of the sculptures which are cut on both sides of those stones (a sort of dark, friable sandstone) to afford representations of the constellations, and thus to exhibit the remains of a very ancient and curious zodiac, differing totally, in some

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

respects, from any with which we are acquainted, and emitting a brilliant ray upon the antiquities of the western world; for, between the hieroglyphics of Ava and Egypt, a striking analogy is particularly remarked by Symes, and every day's discoveries tend to confirm the fact."*

"In point of magnitude," says a writer in *The Scotsman in the East*, "the monuments of Arracan are unequalled by any hitherto explored by me, and in some particulars differ essentially from the remains of former magnificence I have examined, either on the continent of India, or on the islands of the Eastern Archipelago. Similar to those of Java, they consist of *octagonal* temples, surrounded with bell-shaped fanes, but, unlike them, are less decorated with sculpture, and are distinguished by stupendous arches, vaults, and arched galleries, which, I had thought, existed only in the imagination of poets and novelists. There exist here the ruins of nearly three edifices, which consist of circular galleries, arches, and vaults, built of brick and stone, strong, cemented with mortar, and of the most massy construction. These subterraneous passages (for they consist of excavations in rocky masses of the hills) contain not fewer, probably, than *ten thousand images* of Buddha, varying in size from not less than fifteen or twenty feet high to an inch. Many of them are decapitated, which I attribute to the Mussulmans in their irruption into this province, as I have discovered a portion of an Arabic inscription near one of the entrances of the principal temple. In that extraordinary edifice, of which a portion is ornamented with various sculptures, (among which we are enabled to discern the Ganesa Garuda and Nag Sing

* Asiat. Journ., April 1826, p. 512.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

of Hindoo mythology,) is contained the *sacred foot*, consisting of a large slab of grey schist, about 3 feet 10 inches long, and 3 feet broad, on which appears a rude representation of five mis-shapen toes and the side of a foot. Close behind this was a smaller, which I secured. These passages contain double, triple, and quadruple rows of fanes and niches, each containing a large figure of Buddha, accompanied with prodigious numbers of smaller dimensions.

"Near the entrance is an inscription in ancient Deva-Nagri character, upon a large slab of sand-stone, the letters of which are remarkably distinct, and the writing legible throughout, so far as has yet been cleared. The square courts in front of these buildings exhibit numerous traces of tesselated pavements, or mosaic work, of brick and stone; and some of the temples contain metallic images of Buddha, so large that the nail of his finger, in one instance, measures upwards of half a foot! The metal of which these stupendous idols are composed, seems an alloy resembling the *tutenague*, or white copper, so commonly made use of India. The bells in front of the pagoda are remarkably fine. One in particular is of immense size, and entirely covered with inscriptions in the Birman language." *

Arracan is situated in lat. 20° 40′ N., long. 93° 5′ E. The city stands about two tides' journey from the sea, on the west side of the Arracan river, which here expands to a noble sheet of water, although it has but a short course, rising in the hills to the N.E. The harbour, however, cannot be approached without hazard during the south-west monsoon, on account of

* Asiat. Journ., vol. xx. p. 695. The Rukheng is the more ancient and primitive dialect of the Birman, and the character is very similar.—See *Asiat. Res.*, vol. x. p. 222.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

rocks and sands off its entrance. The climate has been reported to be salubrious, but the occupation of the city by the British troops was attended by a frightful mortality, and the stench of the forests after the rains have subsided, is described as most pestiferous.* Fowls of the finest breed, deer, and game of all kinds abound in the neighbourhood. Large herds of elephants inhabit the forests. The crops of grain appear to be abundant, if we may judge from the stores accumulated in the capital: about half a million *mounds* of paddy were found deposited in the fort of Arracan at the time of its capture by the British. The number of villages in Arracan Proper is about eighty.

The principal exports are bees' wax and ivory, brought from the inland country; salt, produced on the coast; rice, grown on the contiguous islands, which are highly fertile; small horses; lead, tin, and the precious metals. A considerable intercourse is carried on with the provinces of Bengal, especially Chittagong; and a general coasting-trade was maintained along this shore, during the north-west monsoon, from the ports of Henzawuddy and Martaban, to Chittagong, Dacca, and Calcutta. From forty to fifty boats of 500 *maunds* (of 80 lbs.) each, were annually fitted out at Arracan by merchants from Amarapura and

* According to a register published in the East India Gazette, the fall of rain at Arracan in the month of July, was nearly 60 inches: in August, it was rather more than 43½. A great deal had fallen previously in the months of April, May, and June. The rainy season in most parts of the tropics, yields from 100 to 115 inches of water; at Bombay, 106 inches. In the West of England, the mean quantity of rain that falls annually, is only 57 inches. The greatest height of the thermometer in July was 89°: in August, it rose to 94°. The *minimum* in these months was 77°. The weather in March also is usually very sultry, the thermometer frequently rising above 95° at noon, with a dry, hot wind, as at the commencement of the hot season in the upper provinces of India.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

Chagaing, for the Bengal trade: * the cargo of each boat might amount to 4000 rupees, chiefly in silver bullion. One half of them regularly returned laden with red betel-nut, chiefly from Luckipoor, where the merchants farmed the plantations of this article.

The acquisition of Arracan must be considered as of immense importance. It gives us the undisputed possession of the whole coast of the Bay of Bengal, including a range of valuable harbours, and confers facilities for extending our commerce, which may be deemed alone sufficient to counterbalance the charges of the late war.

The once powerful monarchies of Magadha, Pegu, and Assam, have passed away; that of Siam is dwindled to the shadow of its ancient greatness; and now the Birman empire, which had swallowed up those rival states, and, like a mighty serpent gorged with its prey, was rendered powerless by its voracity, lies bleeding and dismembered. Deprived of the maritime provinces of Arracan, Mergui, and Tavoy, the sovereign of Ava can no longer lay claim to the title of lord of the waters: and it matters little what becomes of the white elephant. Buddhism may be considered as having already received its death blow. In Ceylon, it is fast giving way before the progress of education and the exertions of the missionaries, and the sacred language has, for the first time, been made to speak the oracles of God. Buddhic priests have been transformed into Christian clergymen, and Birmah may hereafter be indebted to that island which she has long regarded as the mother-land of her laws, literature, and reli-

* In the advance of the British forces to Prome, a large convoy of at least 400 bullocks, laden with commodities, was met proceeding to Arracan; and a deputation was sent to inquire of the British commander, whether the road was open for them.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

gion, for missionaries of a purer faith. In the meantime, the results of the patient and exemplary labours of the American missionaries must not be lightly estimated. As pioneers in the work of civilization, they have done incalculable service. The number of professed converts may be inconsiderable,* but it is evident that they have done much towards undermining the prejudices of the natives, and wakening a spirit of intelligent inquiry among the higher orders. The impression of the superiority of the British in arts and arms, which our conquests cannot fail to produce, will not a little favour any attempts to impart to them the blessing of Christian instruction; while the more intimate commercial intercourse which promises to be carried on between British India and the Indo-Chinese nations, will inevitably lead to the most beneficial results. In Birmah, there is no intolerant sacerdotal caste to intercept the diffusion of knowledge; there, no shoodras are condemned to eternal mental bondage; nor is woman there reduced to a cipher or a slave. The machinery of instruction seems ready prepared in the national institutions, and the *sayats* may hereafter serve the same purpose as the Jewish synagogues in the Apostolic age. The costly war into which the British have been reluctantly forced, and which has shaken the Birman empire to its foundations, will, we doubt not, prove a benefit to that country, which it has laid open to the progress of knowledge and the

* In 1825, the first native Christian church established at Rangoon, consisted of eighteen baptised converts. Mr. Hough had retired to Serampore, where he was engaged in superintending the printing of Dr. Judson's revised translation of the Gospel of St. Matthew in the Birman language. The Serampore missionaries, it seems, have already established stations in Arracan, which bids fair to be a most important sphere of exertion and channel of communication.—*Miss. Reg.* Feb. 1826, p. 76.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

spirit of enterprise; nor will an extension of the British territory and a crore of rupees be the only compensation gained by the dear-bought triumph of our arms. Its commercial and its moral results must be infinitely more important.*

* While these sheets have been passing through the press, despatches have been received, announcing the ratification of a treaty of peace between the Honourable Company and the Burmese Government, of which the terms are to the following effect:—"The four provinces of Arracan, and the provinces of Mergui, Tavoy, and Zea to be ceded in perpetuity to the Honourable Company, and the Burmese Government engage to pay the Honourable Company one crore of rupees by instalments. The provinces or kingdoms of Assam, Cachar, Zeatung (Sittong, Zeet-taung, Chitoung), and Mummipore, to be placed under princes to be named by the British Government. Residents, with an escort of fifty men, to be at each court. British ships to be admitted into Burmese ports, to land their cargoes free of duty, not to unship their rudders or land their guns. Burmese ships to have the same privilege in British ports. No person to be molested for their opinions or conduct during the war. The Siamese nation to be included in the peace." Dated Jan. 3, 1826.

END OF BIRMAH.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

Digitized by Google

Original from
UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

SIAM.

Digitized by Google

Original from
UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

Digitized by Google

Original from
UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

SIAM.

[A kingdom lying between lat. 12° and 18° N., and long. 99° and 104° E.; bounded on the N. and W. by Birmah;* on the E. by Cambodia and Anam; on the S. by the Gulf of Siam.]

THE kingdom of Siam ranked at one period, in wealth and importance, at the head of the Indo-Chinese states. Though considerably reduced in its geographical limits, within the last fifty years, by the encroachments of the Birmans, it still extends over a vast and highly valuable tract of country, comprising the shores of the Gulf of Siam, and the grand valley of the Meinam. The name under which it is known, is said to be of Malay origin, and signifies black; an appellation probably derived from the colour of its rich alluvial soil.† The Siamese call themselves *T'hay* (or *Tai*), that is, Free-men or Franks. They are divided

* The northern boundaries of Siam appear not to be ascertained. In Hamilton's Gazetteer, Siam is stated to lie principally between the parallels of 10° and 15°; while Mr. Crawfurd makes it extend as far southward as lat. 7°, and its Malayan tributaries to 3°. To the northward, he says, the extreme confines of the Siamese territory extend, as far as could be learned, to lat. 25°.—*Asiat. Jour.* vol. xix. p. 12. The boundary of Siam Proper, however, has been understood to be a river that flows from the westward into the Meinam between lat. 17° and 18°.

† Plutarch informs us, that the priests of Isis called their country *Chemia*, Black, (evidently the same word as *Syáma*,) from its rich, black soil. And it will appear that this is not the only remarkable coincidence between the valley of Egypt and that of "the Siamese Nile." The Peguans pronounce the word Tsiam. Sayammay or Chiamay is probably derived from the same word.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

into two distinct tribes; the *T'hay J'hay*, or Great Tai, who inhabit the country between the Meinam and the Meikong, and the *Thay Noë*, or Little Tai, who, for the most part, inhabit the western bank of the Meinam, extending to the frontiers of Birmah, and who are at present the ruling race in Siam.* The former are the more ancient race; and they are the people once famous for their learning and the power of their empire. The records of their dynasty are supposed still to exist. The annals of the latter race are said to detail, with much minuteness and great exaggeration, the events which have happened in Siam and the adjacent states during the last 1000 years. They also, with less precision, go back 400 years earlier, to the building of the city *Maha Nakhon*. Their astronomical era, however, is said to correspond to A.D. 638.†

HISTORY OF SIAM.

Wars with Pegu and usurpations of the throne constitute the only leading features of Siamese history subsequently to the discovery of the country. In 1568, Chaumigren, king of Pegu, invaded Siam, and after scenes of carnage, its monarch became his tributary. On his death in 1583, the king of Siam, as well as the kings of Ava and Tonghoo revolted; and about 1600, after a series of desolating wars, succeeded in establishing their independence.‡ Early in the seven-

* Leyden. As. Res. vol. x. p. 241.

† See p. 104. M. Malte Brun, without stating his authority, says, that their first king began his reign about A.D. 756.

‡ "The Kingdom of Siam," says Le Blanc, "was subject to continual revolutions, till Bramaa, king of Pegu," (who is stated to have been the son of the conqueror Chaumigren,) "took occa-

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

teenth century, Rajah Hapi, or the black king, subdued the countries of Cambodia, Laos, Tenasserim, and several other states; but these conquests were not long retained, owing to the civil wars which ensued. Chaw Naraya, who ascended the throne in 1657, dissatisfied, as it should seem, with the conduct of his own priests, gave great encouragement to both Christians and Mohammedans to settle in his kingdom. It was in his reign that a series of romantic adventures placed an Ionian Greek at the head of the administration of an Indo-Chinese kingdom.

Constantine Phalcon, a native of Cephalonia, of a noble Venetian family, but reduced to poverty, being compelled to seek his fortune in foreign lands, came to England in the year 1660, where his talents soon recommended him to employment. He was sent out to India, whence, having entered the service of a respectable merchant of the name of White, he passed into Siam. He gradually acquired property sufficient to freight some ships, but disasters attended his course, and he was at length wrecked on the coast of Malabar, and lost every thing except about 2,000 crowns. Here, however, by one of those strange turns of fortune which sometimes make history read like fiction, he fell in with a fellow-sufferer, who proved to be no less important a personage than an ambassador from the king of Siam to the shah of Persia. Phalcon, being able to speak Siamese, offered his services to convey back the envoy to Siam, which were gladly accepted; and the grateful noble recommended him so warmly to his master, that

sion to besiege Odiaa". (Yuthia or Yoodra); "but leaving his life in the siege, his successor demolished the town, and obtained the white elephant. Since then, Siam hath revenged herself upon Pegu."

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

the Greek soon became the favourite, and, in effect, the prime minister of the sovereign.

Such was the state of things when, in 1685, a French embassy, attended by six Jesuits and a body of French soldiers, arrived at Bankok, the capital, to convert the king of Siam to the Christian faith, and lay the foundations of a Gallic-Indian empire. With the view of carrying into effect his ulterior designs, Phalcon had opened a trade with France; and under the pretext of protecting the navigation of the Gulf of Siam against the Dutch, he procured the introduction of a French garrison into the strong ports of Bankok and Mergui. He secured the warm support of the Jesuits by renouncing the Protestant for the Popish faith; and so great was the ascendancy he had obtained over the mind of Chaw Naraya, that, at his instigation, more than three hundred nobles were put to death, to clear the way for his ambitious plans. By these atrocious measures, Phaloon could not fail to render himself the object of universal hatred to the Siamese, who saw with indignation their seminaries filled with foreign teachers, and their cities with European troops. A dangerous illness which attacked the king at Lou-oo, his favourite hunting-seat, to the north of Yuthia, enabled them to mature their plans for ridding themselves of the foreigners. At the head of the conspiracy was a foster-brother of Chaw Naraya's, named Oc-pra Pecherachas, or Pitrachas; an individual whose professed zeal for the national faith secured the attachment of all the *talapoins* or priests, and he is said to have been at the same time highly popular. Phalcon, having received intelligence of his designs, immediately sent orders to the French commander at Bankok to advance with a strong detachment to Lou-oo; but, on reaching Yuthia, through

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

which it was necessary to pass, the French found the gates shut and the country in arms. Pitrachas was already in possession of the palace, and at the head of an army; and the wretched adventurer fell, without a struggle, into the hands of his enemy. After enduring dreadful tortures, he was beheaded. The adopted son and declared heir of Chaw Naraya was the next victim: he was put into a scarlet sack, and beaten to death with clubs of sandal wood.* The brothers of the king shared the same fate; and on the day following their execution, disease saved the usurper the additional crime of removing by violent means the unhappy monarch himself: he expired in the thirty-second year of his reign.

The Jesuits and the French troops, it may easily be conceived, would not be very desirous to prolong their residence in a country where they had now neither allies nor protectors. They were glad to come to an arrangement, which provided for their undisturbed retreat and embarkation, but denounced, as the only alternative, the penalty of death. Thus were the crafty schemes of the French monarch rendered abortive, and, as M. Malte Brun, expresses it, "the connexion with France was broken off."†

* This inhuman mode of execution was probably adopted to save the shedding of royal blood.

† There can be no doubt that the priests had a principal hand in this rebellion. A report had been spread, that the king had shewn a disposition to embrace the Christian religion. The Jesuits indeed state, that they had no ground to entertain such an expectation, and that Constantine had assured them, that such an idea was wholly out of the question. A speech, however, is attributed to him, in which he expressed his disbelief in the doctrine of metempsychosis, and his belief in one Eternal God. It is difficult to reconcile the representations made as to the enlightened and patriotic character of this prince, with the cruelties of which, at the

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

Pitrachas, when seated on the throne, is stated to have conducted himself with prudence and lenity. The reign of his successor was marked by two calamitous events. In 1717, he invaded Cambodia with an army of 50,000 men, half of whom perished for want of provisions; and some time after, a season of extraordinary drought, causing, probably, a failure of the annual inundation, led to a famine, by which Siam was to a great extent depopulated. This monarch died in 1748, at an advanced age, and was succeeded by his son Chaw-Oual-Padou, in whose reign took place the first Birman invasion, under the famous Alom-praw. The death of that enterprising chief at that time saved the capital, but in 1767, Shembuan-praw took Yuthia by assault, and made the king of Siam his prisoner.* Pe-ya-tac, the son of a wealthy Chinese by a Siamese woman, who had risen from a humble office in the palace to be governor of the province of Muong-tac, having taken refuge in Chantibond, was soon in a condition to make head against the enemy; and he at length succeeded in expelling the Birmans from the valley of the Meinam. Having declared himself king, he removed the capital to Bankok, which he fortified, and where he built a palace, which is still to be seen. Every second or third year, he was involved in war with his restless and ambitious neighbours, the Birmans, whom he uniformly repulsed; and he not only recovered all the former Siamese territories, but extended them. Appreciating the superior industry of his countrymen, the Chinese, he granted them pecu-

instigation of Constantine, he is said to have been guilty, and which may be thought, after all, to have had as much share in producing the rebellion, as his supposed heterodoxy.

* See p. 30.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

liar privileges, as an inducement to settle in his dominions; and they came in such swarms, that a third of the population of Siam is now said to be Chinese. Pe-ya-tac conducted himself for some time with exemplary moderation, and his memory is still honoured for his regard of justice. In the latter part of his reign, however, a sordid avarice took possession of his mind, and impelled him to the commission of several acts of cruelty. The natural consequence was a conspiracy, headed by the father of the late monarch,* who, having put to death the tyrant, took possession of the undisputed throne. He died in 1782.

The first public act of his son and successor was an inauspicious commencement of his reign. He was scarcely seated on the throne, when he put to death his nephew Chaw Pha, with upwards of a hundred nobles, who were supposed to be in his interest. The odium occasioned by this sanguinary proceeding, he contrived to avert by his subsequent good conduct; but he was probably indebted, in no small degree, to incessant wars with the Birmans for the domestic tranquillity of his reign. It is understood that, since Mr. Crawfurd's mission to Siam in 1821, he has been succeeded by his illegitimate son, Chroma Chit, who commenced his reign by allowing a general freedom of trade to both his subjects and foreigners, except in the articles of fire-arms, opium, and a few other royal monopolies.

As the greater part of our information respecting the present state of Siam is derived from the published accounts of the mission, from the Governor-general of India to the court of Bankok, in 1821, we shall now

* The monarch who was reigning in 1822, at the time of Mr. Crawfurd's mission.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

proceed to give, in connexion with a narrative of that mission, a description of the capital.*

On the 21st of November, 1821, the "Agent," Mr. Crawford, with the other gentlemen attached to the mission, (the object of which was to open a friendly intercourse for the purpose of trade between the two countries,) embarked at Calcutta, and on the 21st of March following, they cast anchor off the coast of Siam. They had to send for a pilot to Packnam, † a village at the mouth of the river; and it was not till the 25th, that they attempted to cross the bar. They succeeded in clearing the sand-bank, but the ship stuck in a bar of mud, on which, at ebb tide, there are only six feet water. Towards evening, as the tide rose, the vessel got afloat again; and after passing two or three short reaches, they cast anchor opposite to Packnam. At its mouth, the river, which forms an angle with the entrance to the harbour, is about a mile and a half in breadth; it diminishes to about three quarters of a mile at Packnam, but is very deep: the banks are low and wooded. At this village, near a Buddhic monastery, there is a battery consisting of ten or twelve iron guns, mounted on decayed carriages, half sunk into the earth, and unserviceable. The houses extend in a straggling line for several miles along the banks, and there are some handsome temples. As they ascended the river, the banks still continued very low, but, being thickly planted with the *attap*, they had rather a picturesque appearance. In the back-

* See "The Mission to Siam and Hué. From the Journal of the late George Finlayson, Esq., Surgeon and Naturalist to the Mission. With a Memoir by Sir T. S. Raffles, F.R.S." London, 1826. Also, Asiat. Jour., vol. xix. p. 12.

† This word, of frequent occurrence in Siam as the name of a place, apparently signifies the mouth of a river.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

ground, the betel-palm was seen growing in great abundance,—it is supposed spontaneously. Besides these, the jungle consisted of various species of calamus, bamboo, and long grass. Further up, extensive plains opened to view, occupying the left bank of the river, now between eight and ten feet above the level of the stream. In the rainy season, these plains are covered by the inundation to the depth of two or three feet, and are therefore well adapted for the cultivation of rice. Between them and the river, there is a narrow strip of jungle, and small houses or huts, built on piles, are interspersed along the bank, amid extensive plantations of areca-palm and plantain, with a few cocoa-nut trees. The opposite bank is covered with jungle.* The banks are tolerably steep, with very deep water, from thirty to sixty feet near their edge; the mud stiff and plastic. At night they were molested by mosquitoes.

As they approached Bankok, the next morning, the river assumed a very lively aspect. Canoes and small covered boats were plying in all directions. "The market hour was now approaching, and all seemed life and activity. Here, one or more of the priests of Buddha were guiding their little canoe on its diurnal eleemosynary excursion: there, an old woman hawked betel, plantains, or pumpkins. Here, you saw canoes laden with cocoa-nuts: there, groupes of natives were proceeding from house to house on their various occupations. But the most singular feature in the busy scene was the appearance of the houses, floating on the water, in rows about eight, ten, or more, in depth from the bank. This novel appearance was peculiarly

* Mr Finlayson noticed here, the adjutant and several species of *falco*, a beautiful species of pigeon, and the blue jay of Bengal.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

neat and striking. The houses were built of boards, of a neat oblong form, and towards the river were provided with a covered platform, on which were displayed numerous articles of merchandise, fruit, rice, meat, &c. This was, in fact, a floating bazar, in which all the various products of China and of the country were exposed for sale. At either end, the houses were bound to long bamboos driven into the river. They are thus enabled to move from place to place, according as convenience may demand. Every house is furnished with a small canoe, in which they visit and go from place to place to transact business. Almost all those collected in this quarter seem to be occupied by merchants, many of them very petty no doubt, and by tradespeople, as shoe-makers, tailors, &c. The latter occupations are followed almost exclusively by the Chinese. The houses are in general very small, consisting of a principal centre room, and one or two small ones, the centre being open in front, for the display of their wares. The houses are from twenty to thirty feet in length, and about half that space in breadth. They consist of a single stage, the floor raised above the water about a foot, and the roof thatched with palm-leaves. At low water, when the stream is rapid, there appears to be but little business done in these shops. Their proprietors are then to be seen lolling or sleeping in front of their warehouses, or otherwise enjoying themselves at their ease. At all hours of the day, however, many boats are passing and repassing. They are so light and sharp in their form, that they mount rapidly against the stream. They are rowed with paddles, of which the long canoes have often eight or ten on each side. The number of Chinese appears to be very considerable; they display the same activity and industry here that they do

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

wherever they are to be found. Their boats are generally larger, and rowed by longer paddles. They have a sort of cabin, made of basket-work, in the centre, which serves to contain their effects, and answers the purposes of a house. Many of them carry pieces of fresh pork up and down the river for sale."

BANKOK.

THE Mei-nam, at Bankok, is about a quarter of a mile in breadth, not including the space on each side occupied by floating houses; its depth, close to the bank, varies from six to ten fathoms; its current is about three miles an hour. It brings down a large volume of water, containing a considerable proportion of soft mud. The fort and palace of Pe-ya-tac are on the right bank of the river: they have a mean and paltry appearance. The palace of the present king is situated on the left bank, nearly opposite, upon a narrow island between two and three miles in length. "This palace, and indeed almost the whole island, is surrounded with a wall, in some places of considerable height, with indifferent-looking bastions here and there, and numerous gates. The persons attached to the court reside here in wretched huts made of palm-leaves. There is, in fact, but little distinction between this place and other parts of the town, except that you see few Chinese there, and that the shops are of inferior quality. The greater part, however, of the space included by the wall, consists of waste ground, swamps, and fruit-gardens.

"The city is continuous with the palace, extending on both sides of the river to the distance of three or four miles; but it lies principally on the left bank. The town is built entirely of wood; the palaces of the

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

king, the temples, and the houses of a few chiefs being alone constructed of brick or mud walls. From the great length which it occupies along the banks of the river, it might be supposed to be a place of vast extent; this, however, is not the case. The Siamese may be said to be aquatic in their disposition. The houses rarely extend more than one or two hundred yards from the bank of the river; and by far the greater number of them are floating on bamboo rafts, secured close to the bank. The houses that are not so floated, are built on posts driven into the mud, and raised above the bank; a precaution rendered necessary both by the diurnal tides and by the annual inundation. To every house, whether floating or not, there is attached a boat, generally very small, for the use of the family. There is little travelling but what is performed by water; and hence the arms both of the women and the men acquire a large size from the constant habit of rowing.

"The few streets that Bankok boasts, are passable on foot only in dry weather; the principal shops, however, and the most valuable merchandise, are found along the river in the floating houses, occupied almost exclusively by Chinese. The greatest uniformity prevails in the appearance of the houses. A handsome spire here and there serves to enliven the view; and these are the only ornaments which can be said to produce this effect, for the singular architecture displayed in the construction of the temples and palaces, can hardly be considered in this light.

"The floating-houses, like every other building in the place, consist of one floor only. The houses generally have a neat appearance; they are, for the most part, thatched with palm-leaves, but sometimes with

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

tiles. They are divided into several small apartments, of which the Chinese always allot the central one for the reception of their household gods. The shops, forming one side of the house, being shut up at night, are converted into sleeping apartments. The whole is disposed with the greatest economy of space; even the narrow verandahs in front, on which are usually disposed jars of water, pots with herbs and plants, bundles of firewood, &c. They have become so habituated to this sort of aquatic life, as scarcely to experience any inconvenience from it. The walls and floors of the houses are formed of boards; and considering the nature of the climate, such buildings afford very comfortable shelter. The houses of the common people are equally wretched in appearance with those of a common bazar in India. Those occupied by the Chinese are in general neater and more comfortable. The latter people are not only the principal merchants, but the only artificers in the place. The most common trades are those of tinsmith, blacksmith, and currier. The manufacture of tin vessels is very considerable, and the utensils, being polished bright, and often of very handsome forms, give an air of extreme neatness to the shops in which they are displayed. Were it not for the very extraordinary junction of the trade of currier, such places might readily be mistaken for silversmiths' shops.

"The palaces are buildings of inconsiderable size, in the Chinese style, covered with a diminishing series of three or four tiled roofs, sometimes terminated by a small spire; they are more remarkable for singularity than beauty. The palace of the king is covered with tin tiles. Many of the temples cover a large extent of ground: they are placed in the most elevated and best

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

situations, surrounded with brick walls or bamboo hedges, and the enclosure contains numerous rows of buildings, disposed in straight lines. They consist of one spacious and, in general, lofty hall, with narrow but numerous doors and windows. Both the exterior and interior are studded over with a profusion of minute and singular ornaments of the most varied description. It is on the ends, and not on the sides of the exterior of the building, that the greatest care has been bestowed in the disposition of the ornaments. A profusion of gilding, bits of looking-glass, China basins of various colours, stuck into the plaster, are amongst the most common materials. The floor of the temple is elevated several feet above the ground, and generally boarded or paved, and covered with coarse mats. The wildest stories of Hindoo theology figure on the walls. Sometimes, the painter's hand, by accident, perhaps, more than design, has portrayed human passions with a degree of spirit and of truth worthy of better subjects.* At one end of the temple, a sort of altar is raised, on which is placed the principal figure of Buddha, surrounded by innumerable smaller ones, and by those of priests; and here and there is disposed the figure of a deceased king, distinguished by his tall, conical cap, peculiar physiognomy, and rich costume. The figures of Buddha have a cast of the Tartar countenance, particularly the eye of that race. It will scarcely be credited how numerous are the images of Buddha in the temples. They are disposed with unsparing profusion on the altar, of all sizes, from one inch to thirty feet in height. In the

* Here, for the first time, Mr. Finlayson observed obscene paintings in a temple dedicated to Buddha. "In Ceylon, they would have been deemed altogether profane."

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

outer courts of the temple, they are disposed in still greater number.*.....The expense in gilding alone (for every image is gilt) must be great.

"The arrangement observed in the *Wāāt-thay-cham-ponn*, may be given as an instance of what occurs in the rest. This consists of a number of temples, *pra-cha-dis*, and buildings allotted for the accommodation of priests, enclosed in an ample square, rather more than a quarter of a mile on each side. The principal temples are further surrounded by a piazza, open only towards the temple, and about twelve or fifteen feet in breadth, and well paved. Against the back wall, a stout platform of masonry extends round the temple, on which are placed gilded figures of Buddha, for the most part considerably larger than the human size, and so close to each other as to leave no vacant place on the platform. Of these statues, the greater number are made of cast iron; others are made of brass, others of wood or of clay, and all with careful uniformity. Several hundreds of such images are thus seen at one glance of the eye. In other and less spacious passages, minor figures, chiefly of clay or wood, are heaped together in endless numbers. They would appear to accumulate so fast, that it seems probable, the priests are at times reduced to the necessity of demolishing hosts of them. The apartments allotted for the accommodation of the priests are clean, neat, substantial, and comfortable, without ornament or superfluity. The pra-cha-di of this temple is the handsomest of the kind in Bankok, and is deserving of notice on account of its architectural beauty.

"The pra-cha-di,† called, by the Buddhists of

* See page 255.

† Mr. Finlayson interprets this word, "the roof of the pra or lord." Sir Thomas Raffles suggests, that both in their character as a

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

Ceylon, *dagoba*, is a solid building of masonry, without aperture or inlet of any sort, however large it may be. It is generally built in the neighbourhood of some temple, but is not itself an object or a place of worship, being always distinct from the temple itself. In its origin, it would appear to have been sepulchral, and destined to commemorate either the death of Buddha, or his translation into heaven. Even at the present time, these ornamental buildings are thought to contain some relic of Buddha. This one in particular makes a light and handsome appearance: the lower part consists of a series of dodecahedral terraces, diminishing gradually to nearly one half of the whole heighth, where they are succeeded by a handsome spire, fluted longitudinally, and ornamented with numerous circular mouldings. The minor ornaments are numerous, and towards the summit there is a small globe of glass. The total height would appear to be about 250 feet from the ground. Minor edifices of this sort are common in every temple. They are in general raised upon a base of twelve sides, but sometimes of eighteen."

Mr. Finlayson describes a temple which they visited, at a short distance from the hall of audience,—a pyramidal structure, its point terminating in a slender spire about 200 feet high. The interior is a lofty chamber, nearly fifty feet square, paved with stones. In the centre were placed, on irregular stages, countless images of Buddha, intermixed with bits of looking-glass, scraps of gilded paper, and Chinese paintings: the whole was surmounted with a figure of Buddha, about a foot and a half high, of some sort of stone,—

sepulchral shrine, and in their form, the pyramid and the dagoba seem to coincide.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

Mr. Finlayson supposes, Chinese figure-stone, or heliotrope. There was nothing in the shape of an altar. The strangers were followed into the temple by a crowd of idlers, whose noisy indecorum shewed little reverence for the place. A paved arcade surrounds the temple, the walls of which are covered with rude paintings of subjects taken from the Ramayana. In the same enclosure there is a small handsome building, also of a pyramidal form, in which are deposited the royal collection of sacred books. A flight of steps leads to it, which, as well as the floor, is covered with plates of tin. The books, which appear to be not very numerous, are contained in a cabinet ornamented with small pieces of mother-of-pearl. At each of the principal gates of this enclosure, stand gigantic earthen images, of grotesque form, with clubs in their hands; and at each angle of the temple, are brass figures of a nondescript animal, somewhat resembling a lion. Besides these, there are other figures of clay, paltry in appearance and absurd in design. Altogether, in the style of their architecture, sculpture, painting, and decoration, the Siamese appeared to Mr. Finlayson to be far behind the rude inhabitants of Ceylon.

The description given of the royal levee, at which the Agent of the Governor-general was presented to his majesty of Siam, exhibits the same ceremonials, but on a far less magnificent scale, that are observed at the court of Ava.* The reception given to Mr.

* The hall was lofty and about 60 feet in length, supported by wooden pillars, ten on each side, painted spirally red and dark green. The ceiling and walls were also painted with wreaths and festoons in various colours. Some small and paltry mirrors were disposed on the walls; glass lustres and wall-shades were hung in the centre; and to the middle of each pillar was attached a lantern, not much better than our stable lanterns. The floor was carpeted. A large and handsome cloth curtain, covered with tinsel or gold

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

Crawfurd was pointedly disrespectful. Indeed, it was afterwards distinctly intimated to him, that the mission had been received by the king as a deputation from a provincial government. Unfortunately, this gentleman arrived in the country totally unacquainted with the manners of the people and the etiquette of the court; and he unwittingly laid himself open to this contemptuous treatment, by entering into negotiations with persons of no authority, and trusting to verbal communications carried on by means of a low and artful fellow, a Malay. With singular indiscretion, also, he gave up the Governor-general's letter to an officer of subordinate rank, and he submitted to be lodged in a species of out-house. No person of rank waited upon him; and even the Portuguese consul excused himself, on the pretence that Mr. Crawfurd had not yet been presented at court; yet, he consented to visit the minister and Prince Chroma-chit, on which occasion his own interpreters were excluded. When at length they were admitted to an audience, his majesty appeared without his crown; a few only of the presents from the Governor-general were exhibited, and no notice whatever was taken of the letter of the noble marquess. On leaving the hall, they were compelled to retrace their steps barefoot through muddy paths; and for a royal present, they each re-

leaf, hung before the arched niche in which was placed the throne, raised about twelve feet above the floor. The appearance of the king strongly reminded Mr. Finlayson of an image of Buddha, and the breathless silence of the prostrate multitude corresponded to the idea of religious worship. Indeed, Buddha himself does not receive such reverential homage from his votaries. When the king rose to go, all the people raised a shout, and turning on their knees, touched with both hands the earth and their forehead alternately. This shout of adoration recalls the abject adulation offered by the Tyrians to Herod, as recorded, Acts, xii. 22.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

ceived a paltry Chinese umbrella, which might have been purchased in the bazar for a rupee. All this might have been expected from the known character and customs of the Indo-Chinese courts; and indeed, the treatment which Col. Symes met with, and more especially Capt. Cox, at Amarapura, might have put Mr. Crawfurd upon his guard against degrading concessions in the first instance. A mercantile agent would naturally be looked upon in a very contemptuous light by these haughty courts, and by the Portuguese and Malay traders with any but friendly feelings. Mr. Crawfurd's mission failed in every respect. They were received with coldness, treated with contempt, and dismissed with indifference.

They had been at Bankok about a month, when it so happened that a Cochin-Chinese embassy arrived at Packnam; and now, they had the mortification of beholding how the court of Siam was accustomed to receive the recognised representative of an equal state. Notice of his arrival having been transmitted to the court, the chief of Packnam was ordered to entertain the ambassador, while preparations were made for conducting him in due form to the capital. The festivities lasted for several days, consisting of scenic representations, musical entertainments, and gymnastic exercises. At the end of a week, all things being ready, he embarked with his train, and proceeded by easy stages up the river. "The scene," says Mr. Finlayson, "was interesting beyond expectation; it was both beautiful and picturesque. The rapidity with which the boats and barges moved, the order and regularity with which innumerable rowers raised and depressed their paddles, guided by the shrill notes of a song that might well be deemed barbarous, together with the singular and barbaric forms, the

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

brilliant colours, the gilded canopies of the boats, the strange and gaudy attire of the men, the loud and reiterated acclamations of innumerable spectators,—gave to the transient scene an effect not easily described.

"It was now, for the first time, that we had an opportunity of seeing those singular and highly-ornamented royal barges which had attracted the attention of M. Chaumont and his suite, ambassador to Siam from the court of Louis XIV. The description given of them by Loubére, in his *Histoire de Siam*, will, with very little alteration, apply to those now in use. They are in general from sixty to eighty feet, or more, in length, about four in breadth, and raised about two feet in the middle from the water, the bow and stern rising boldly to a considerable height. They are highly ornamented with curious and not inelegant devices, all of which are neatly carved on the wood and gilt. The form is that of some monstrous or imaginary animal. In the centre there is erected a canopy, generally well gilt, and hung with silken curtains, or cloth interwoven with gold tissue. The space under the canopy is calculated to contain but one or two persons, the rest of the boat being entirely occupied by the rowers, often to the number of forty or fifty.

"The procession moved in the following order: Four long boats in front, with numerous rowers, dressed in red jackets, and wearing tall conical caps of the same colour. These boats were covered with a light awning of mats. Six richly-ornamented boats, with gilded canopies, in the form of a dome, and richly carved. In these were the assistants and suite of the ambassador. Each boat carried two small brass swivels in front: the men were dressed as in the

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

former. About forty rowers were in each boat. A very handsome, richly-ornamented barge, with a gilt canopy of a conical shape, and rich curtains, in which was the ambassador, bearing the letter from the king of Cochin-China. Four or six boats similar to those in front.

"In the course of a few days after his arrival at Bankok, he was admitted to an audience of the king, without going through those forms which had been pointed out as necessary to be observed by the Agent to the Governor-general. The Cochin-Chinese ambassador neither visited the Prince Chroma-Chit, nor his deputy the Pra-Klang, Suri-Wong, before he had obtained an audience of the king.

"The ambassador was carried to the palace by his own followers in a palanquin, preceded by a number of armed men. He got out of his vehicle at the inner gate, and walking up to the hall of audience without laying aside his shoes, took his seat in the place allotted to him, taking his own interpreter along with him." *

* M. de Chaumont, the ambassador from Louis XIV. in 1685, made still higher terms for the mission, insisting upon keeping on their shoes, contrary to all oriental etiquette, and also upon delivering the letter into the king's own hands, instead of entrusting it to one of the officers. The ambassador, having entered and found the king seated, made three bows in the course of his advance; then began his speech, after two or three words of which, he put on his hat, and delivered the rest sitting and covered. He then rose to give the letter; but it appeared to him that the king's position was much higher than had been stipulated, or than would admit of his delivering the letter without stretching his person in a manner unsuitable to his dignity. He therefore formed the bold resolution not to lift the letter higher than himself. Constantine, the minister, who was lying on his hands and feet, implored him to raise his arm; but the ambassador was deaf; and at last the king, *laughing*, stooped and took the gold box in which the letter was contained. He then conversed for about an hour with great affability,

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

The chief pride of the court of Siam still consists in its elephants; but a white elephant is no longer so great a rarity as to claim to be worshipped as a divine phenomenon, an object of contention between rival powers. Instead of one white elephant, and that an old and sorry one, which the French mission saw, attended by a hundred servants, his Siamese majesty now possesses no fewer than *five*. This, however, is regarded as a most singularly auspicious and extraordinary circumstance. A white elephant is still reckoned above all value, and a subject can perform no service more gratifying to the monarch than that of securing one. All elephants, as in Birmah, are the sacred property of the crown.

"The appellation white, however," says Mr. Finlayson, "as applied to the elephant, must be received with some degree of limitation: the animal is in fact an occasional variety, of less frequent occurrence indeed, but in every respect analogous to what occurs in other orders of animals, and, amongst the rest, in the human species. They are, correctly speaking, albinos, and are possessed of all the peculiarities of that abnormal production; but of these *white* elephants, it was remarkable that the organ of sight was, to all appearance, natural and sound, in no way intolerant of light, readily accommodating itself to the different degrees of light and shade, and capable of being steadily directed to objects at the will of the

and made many inquiries about the affairs of France. All the mandarins in the hall remained flat with their faces to the ground, so long as the king was present. In Siam, every man is doomed to crawl before his superior. The servant crawls before the master, the master before the grandee, the grandee before the prince; and thus, the greatest men are doomed to take their turn of groveling. In Siam, as in Birmah, it is unlawful to speak of the king *by name*, and wives never pronounce the names of their lords.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

animal; in short, similar in all respects to that of the common elephant, with the exception of the iris, which was of a pure white colour. In this respect, they resembled all the quadrupedal albinos that I had hitherto seen, as those among horses, cows, rabbits. This circumstance I should scarcely have thought worth the noticing, were it not that I shall have occasion to mention in the sequel an instance of an animal of the albino kind, possessed of the peculiar eye of the human albino. In one or two of the elephants, the colour was strictly white, and in all of them, the iris was of that colour, as well as the margins of the eye-lids; in the rest, the colour had a cast of pink in it. The hairs upon the body were for the most part yellowish, but much more scanty, finer, and shorter than in other elephants; the strong hairs of the tail were darker, but still of a yellowish colour. In none did the colour and texture of the skin appear entirely healthy. In some, the cuticular texture of the legs was interspersed with glandular knobs, which gave a deformed appearance to these members. In others, the skin of the body was uncommonly dry, while the natural wrinkles were unusually large, secreted an acrid-like fluid, and seemed ready to burst out into disease. These beasts were all of small size, but in excellent condition; and one of them was even handsome. They were treated with the greatest attention, each having several keepers attached to him. Fresh-cut grass was placed in abundance by their side; they stood on a small boarded platform, kept clean; a white cloth was spread before them; and while we were present, they were fed with sliced sugar-cane, and bunches of plantains.*

* When the King of Pegu was at the zenith of his power, the undisputed Lord of the White Elephant, the sacred animals, we are

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

" In the same place we observed rather a fine-looking elephant, but a small one, which appeared to me to be a greater object of curiosity than any of the others. This animal was covered all over with black spots, about the size of a pea, upon a white base. It is not unusual to observe a partial degree of this spotted appearance in the elephant of Bengal, as on the forehead and trunk of the animal; but in this instance, the skin was entirely covered with them.

" The greatest regard is entertained in Siam for the white elephant. He who discovers one, is regarded as the most fortunate of mortals. The event is of that importance, that it may be said to constitute an

told, were served in vessels of vermilion; musical instruments preceded their steps when they went forth to take exercise or to drink; and when they came up from the stream, a royal attendant washed their feet in a golden basin! In Hamilton's description of Hindostan, there is an account of the household establishment of the white elephant belonging to the Emperor of Birmah, which goes even beyond this in absurdity. The sacred animal had his regular cabinet, composed of a *woongee*, a *woondock*, a *serogee*, a *nakhaan*, and various subordinate officers. Presents of muslins, chintzes, and silks, were regularly made to him by all foreign ambassadors. His residence, it is said, " is contiguous to the royal palace, with which it is connected by a long, open gallery, supported by numerous wooden pillars, at the further end of which a curtain of black velvet, embossed with gold, conceals the august animal from the eyes of the vulgar; and before this curtain the offerings intended for him are displayed. His dwelling is a lofty hall, covered with splendid gilding both inside and out, and supported by sixty-four pillars, half of which are elegantly gilded. To two of these his fore feet are fixed by silver chains, while his hind ones are secured by links of a baser material. His bed consists of a thick mattrass covered with blue cloth, over which another of a softer composition is spread, covered with crimson silk. His trappings are very magnificent, being gold, studded with large diamonds, pearls, sapphires, rubies, and other precious stones. His betel-box, spitting-basin, ancle-rings, and the vessel out of which he feeds, are likewise all of gold, inlaid with precious stones; and his attendants and guards amount to one thousand persons."

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

era in the annals of the nation. The fortunate discoverer is rewarded with a crown of silver, and with a grant of land equal in extent to the space of country at which the elephants' cry may be heard. He and his family, to the third generation, are exempted from all sorts of servitude, and their land from taxation.

"The next and only other animals that we saw here, are certainly of very rare occurrence, and objects of great curiosity. These were two white monkeys, perfect albinos in every respect. They are about the size of a small dog, furnished with a tail about as long as the body. They are thickly covered with fur, which is as white as snow, or that of the whitest rabbit. The lips, eyelids, and feet are distinguished by the inanimate whiteness of the skin noticed in the human albino; while the general appearance of the iris, the eye, and even the countenance, the intolerance of the light, the unsettled air they assumed, and the grimace they affected, afforded so many points of resemblance between them and that unhappy variety of our species, as rendered the sight disgusting and humiliating. One who had seen a perfect albino of the human species, would find it impossible to separate the impression of his appearance from that of the animals now before us. These had but little of the vivacity or mischievous disposition for which this tribe is so remarkable. All their movements, all their attitudes, had for their apparent object the lessening of the effect of light and glare, towards which they always turn their backs. Their eye-brows seemed pursed up and contracted, the pupils were of a light rose-colour, the irides of a very pale cast of blue. One was very old, and had but few teeth in his head. His lips were besides remarkably thick, and apparently diseased. The other was much younger.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

"It did not appear that they were held in any degree of veneration by the Siamese: we learned that they were placed here from superstitious motives, with the object, as they said, of preventing evil spirits from killing the white elephants." *

There are no data which enable us to estimate the population of Bankok. At least one half are supposed to be Chinese; the remainder consist of Siamese, native Christians,† Birmans, Peguans, Malays, and Laos, — probably the same people as the Tai-yay, or Northern Siamese. These different classes occupy distinct portions of the town, and associate only with their countrymen. The population of the kingdom of Siam was computed, in 1750, to amount to something short of two millions of adults, which would give a population of between three and four millions; but no dependence can be placed on the estimate. Since then, Siam has been deprived of a very large and important portion of territory. On the other hand, the

* About two years before, the king was stated to have had in his possession, an albino of the deer kind; and albinos among buffaloes are, Mr. Finlayson says, not uncommon in Siam or in the Malay Islands. "How far the habit is developed by peculiarity of climate, it is difficult to determine. The geographical limits within which this variety occurs with unwonted frequency, are not very extensive." All the elephants which he saw here, were smaller than the Ceylon elephant, but of handsomer shape; their tusks were also shorter, and less curved. The royal tiger is very commonly to be met with in the interior; the black tiger is by no means rare; and the leopard is common. The bones of the tiger, to which medical virtues are ascribed, are, as well as skins, a considerable article of trade with China.

† Chiefly the descendants of Portuguese settlers, a degraded and despised class, who are found throughout the coasts of Hindostan and Indo-China, but who, as interpreters, form a valuable link of communication. They speak Portuguese, in general, with ease and fluency, and may be considered as forming a caste or nation almost as distinct as the Armenians or Jews.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

eastern province of Chantibond, acquired from Cambodia, is supposed to contain nearly a million; but others reckon it under half that number.

Before we take leave of the capital, we shall gather up a few additional scattered notices relating to the national customs and physical character.

MANNERS AND CUSTOMS.

Mr. Finlayson describes the Siamese physiognomy as characterised by a remarkably large face, the forehead very broad, prominent on each side, and the hairy scalp descending unusually low, so as to cover in some the whole of the temples; the cheek-bones are large, wide, and prominent; but the most remarkable peculiarity is the extraordinary size of the back part of the lower jaw, which has almost the effect, on a careless inspection, of a swelling of the parotid gland. A similar appearance is often observable in Malays. The eyes are small and oblique; the mouth is large; the lips thick; the beard scanty; the hair thick, coarse, lank, and uniformly black, and both sexes wear it cut so short behind, as only to reach the tops of the ears, but leave a short tuft on the head, which they comb backward. The people generally go naked from the waist upwards, sometimes throwing a piece of cloth over the shoulders. The younger women fasten a short piece of cloth round the chest, leaving the shoulders and arms bare. From the loins to the knee, they wrap round them a piece of coloured cloth, generally blue, over which the better sort wear a piece of Chinese crape, or a shawl. Both the head and the feet are generally bare. Those who use papouches, or slippers, invariably lay them aside on entering their dwellings, and never wear them in the presence of

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

their superiors or of the priests. The mandarins wear, besides the loin-cloth, (called by the Portuguese *pagne*, from the Latin *pannus*,) which is generally black, a muslin shirt or vest, and, on days of ceremony, a high conical cap, somewhat resembling the king's; only that his is encircled with jewellery, while their respective rank is indicated by circles of gold, silver, or vermilion.

"The skin of the Siamese is of a lighter colour than in the generality of Asiatics to the west of the Ganges, by far the greater number being of a yellow complexion; a colour which, in the higher ranks, and particularly among women and children, they take pleasure in heightening by the use of a bright yellow wash or cosmetic, so that their bodies are often rendered of a golden colour. The texture of the skin is remarkably smooth, soft, and shining."*

The Siamese women are represented by M. Loubére as both cleanly and modest. They are fond to excess of the bath, using it repeatedly in the twenty-four hours, and they are generally excellent swimmers, but they never lay aside the *pagne*. They never make a visit of ceremony without a previous ablution. They use perfumes, and apply a paste to their lips, which increases their natural pallidness, in order, it may be presumed, to set off their blackened teeth.

The food of the Siamese consists chiefly of rice, which is eaten with a substance called *balachong*, "a strange compound of things savoury and loathsome, but in such general use, that no one thinks of eating without some portion of it." Their religion, as in the

* This fondness for a golden complexion is not peculiar to the Indo-Chinese. Van Egmont tells us, that the Greek ladies at Smyrna, on high occassions, used to *gild* their faces, which was considered as rendering them irresistibly charming.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

case of the Birmans, does not restrain them from animal food, provided that they are guiltless of having killed the animal. They are more choice in their food, however, and less indulgent of their appetites, than the Chinese inhabitants, who are described as *gourmands.*

Indolence is one of the most prominent traits in the character of the Siamese, and the ease with which they can procure the necessaries of life, contributes to foster this habit.* Their chief amusement is gambling, of which they are immoderately fond; they will even stake their wives and children. Both priests and laymen may often be seen squatted on the pavement of a pagoda, playing at chess or some game of chance, before the very shrine of the idol. They are also excessively addicted to smoking. They are very fond of dramatic representations, founded chiefly on the exploits of fabulous and mythological personages, and have the credit of being the best performers among the Indo-Chinese nations. Bull-races, cock-fights, and battles of wild beasts, wrestling, rope-dancing, and fire-works, are also enumerated among the national amusements. The Siamese are moreover a very

* M. Loubére draws the following portrait of a Siamese life: "When the six months' service to the king is expired, it belongs to their wife or mother to maintain them. They apply to no business, as they practice no particular profession. A Siamese works not but for the prince; he neither walks nor hunts; in short, he does nothing but sit or lie, eating, playing, smoking, and sleeping. His wife will wake him at seven in the morning, and serve him with rice and fish; he will fall asleep hereupon, and at noon he will eat again; and will sup at the end of the day. Between these two last meals will be his day: conversation or play consumes the rest. The women plough, and sell and buy. Notwithstanding this unequal yoke on the female sex," he adds, "the Siamese love their wives and children exceedingly, and it appears that they are greatly beloved by them."—p. 50.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

musical people. "Even persons of rank," says Mr. Finlayson, "think it no disparagement to acquire a proficiency in the art. Their music is for the most part extremely lively, and more pleasing to the ear of a European, than the want of proficiency in the more useful arts of civilised life would lead him to expect of such a nation. Whence this proficiency has arisen, it may be somewhat difficult to explain; more especially as the character of their music partakes but little of that eccentricity of genius and apparent heaviness of mind and imagination, for which they are, in other respects, so remarkable. We have no means of ascertaining what is of domestic origin, or how much they may be indebted to foreign intercourse for the improvement of their music. On inquiry, we were told that the principal instruments were of Birman, Peguan, or Chinese origin, and that much of the music had been borrowed from the two first-mentioned nations, particularly from Pegu. "It is somewhat singular that these nations consider the Siamese as superior in musical skill, and attribute to them the invention of the principal instruments, as may be seen in Col. Symes's account of those countries.

"It might be supposed that the Siamese had borrowed their music from the same source that they have their religion, the softness, the playful sweetness and simplicity of the former seeming to harmonise in some degree with the humane tenets, the strict morality, and apparent innocence of the latter. The prominent and leading character, however, of the music, appears to be common to the Malays and other inhabitants of the Indian islands, as well as to the whole of the Indo-Chinese nations.

"My friend Captain Dangerfield, himself an adept in musical science, remarks, that the music of the

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

Siamese differs from that of all barbarous tribes, in being played upon a different key — on that, if I understand him right, which characterises the pathetic music of certain European nations. There is certainly no harsh or disagreeable sound, no sudden or unexpected transition, no grating sharpness in their music. Its principal character is that of being soft, lively, sweet, and cheerful, to a degree which seemed to us quite surprising. They have arrived beyond the point of being pleased with mere sound: the musician aimed at far higher views, that of interesting the feelings, awakening thought, or exciting the passions. Accordingly, they have their different kinds of music, to which they have recourse according as they wish to produce one or other of these effects.

" Their pieces of music are very numerous. A performer of some notoriety, who exhibited before us, stated that he knew 150 tunes. This man brought with him two instruments, the one a wind, the other a stringed instrument. The former, called *klani*, resembled a flageolet, as well in form as in the tones, which, however, were fuller, softer, and louder, than those of that instrument. His manner of blowing on it resembled that of a person using the blow-pipe. He was thus enabled to keep up an uninterrupted series of notes. The other, a more curious, as well as more agreeable instrument, is called *tuk-kay*, from its fancied resemblance to a lizard, though, in point of form, to me it appears to approach nearer to that of a Chinese junk. It is about three feet long, has a hollow body, and three large sounding holes on the back, which is of a rounded form. It is composed of pieces of hard wood, inlaid with mother-of-pearl. Three strings, one of brass wire, the others of silk, supported on

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

small bits of wood, extend from one end of the instrument to the other, and are tuned by means of long pegs. The performer, pressing his left hand on the cords, strikes them at proper distances with the forefinger of the right. There is another instrument, called *khong-nong*, the music of which is also very pleasant. It consists of a series of small cymbals of different sizes, suspended horizontally in a bamboo frame, forming a large segment of a circle. It is sometimes so large, that the performer may sit within the circle of the instrument, his back being then turned to the vacant space. The tones of this instrument are very pleasing. It is usually accompanied by the instrument called *ran-nan*; this is formed of flat bars of wood, about a foot in length, and an inch in breadth, placed by the side of each other, and disposed so as to form an arch, the convexity of which is downwards. Both this and the last-mentioned instrument are struck with a light piece of wood, or a small mallet. In conclusion, we may observe, that there is a very remarkable difference between the character of their vocal and of their instrumental music, the former being as plaintive and melancholy, as the latter is lively and playful."

The Siamese or T'hay language contains a great variety of compositions. Their poems and songs are numerous, as are their *cheritrás* or romantic fictions, which, in their general characteristics, resemble those of the Birman, Rukheng, and Malaya tribes.* Many of the Siamese princes have been celebrated for their poetical powers. Their books of medicine are reckoned

* Dr. Leyden has given the titles of forty-one of the most popular *cheritras*. The *Rama-kien* seems, he says, to be a version of the Ramayana, and the greater part are obviously derived from the Sanscrit through the Pali.—*Asiat. Res.*, vol. x. p. 248.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

of considerable antiquity, and their laws are celebrated all over the East. Their medical practice, however, is behind even that of the Birmans; and their literature is, apparently, altogether exotic. Both in science and in poetry, we are told, those who affect learning and elegance of composition, sprinkle their style copiously with a mixture of Pali.

The language of Siam is considered by Dr. Leyden as an original one. It is, he says, "more purely monosyllabic than the languages of Birmah, Arracan, and Pegu, and is certainly connected in some degree with the Chinese dialects, especially the mandarin or court language, with which its numerals, as well as some other terms, coincide." In its construction, its intonations, and its modes of expression, it coincides much more closely with the Chinese dialects than with those of Birmah; and the words which it has borrowed from the Pali or Magadha, (the sacred language of the votaries of Buddha) are much more contracted and disguised than in the other vernacular idioms.* The Siamese calendar differs little from that of the Chinese. Mr. Finlayson says, indeed, that it is very doubtful if they could construct one without the assistance of a Chinese calendar, which they procure regularly from Pekin. Their era, answering to A.D. 638, also appears to be derived from China.

Their customs approximate to those both of India and China. Polygamy is tolerated. The monarchs have sometimes espoused their own sisters. Women enjoy far less freedom and consideration in Siam, than they do in Birmah. The wife is not allowed to eat with her husband, nor even to sail in the same boat. She must attend no public amusements, but confine

* Asiat. Res. vol. x. p. 244.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

herself to her domestic duties. All the heaviest labour devolves on the females. Their treatment of the dead varies according to the rank of the deceased. The corpses of the poor are unceremoniously thrown into the river. Infants under the age of dentition, and women who have died before delivery, are interred in a superficial grave, — a peculiarity connected with some obscure superstition. With these exceptions, the practice of burning the dead extends to all classes. This is often performed very imperfectly, and the partially consumed bones are left to bleach on the plain, or to be devoured by beasts. In some instances, it is deemed meritorious, before burning the corpse, to distribute the fleshy parts among the beasts of the field and the birds of the air. In other cases, the body is sometimes embalmed before it is burned. This appears to be a relic of a very ancient practice, in use, probably, prior to the introduction of the custom of incineration. The actual state of the art of embalming is characteristic, Mr. Finlayson says, of that general ignorance of the ornamental as well as of the useful arts of civilised life, which is displayed by the modern Siamese.

The criminal punishments, as among the Birmans, are most barbarous. Trial by ordeal is very frequently had recourse to: of this there are various kinds,— walking over hot irons, ordeal by water, and by combat with tigers. Adultery is now punishable only by fine. Debtors are very severely treated, being for the most part reduced to slavery. All males in Siam are enrolled from infancy, and are liable, on becoming adults, to be called on for military service, without pay, during six months of the year. The king has no standing army except his personal guards, who are chiefly Tâtars, but the whole nation is thus formed

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

into a militia. Here, as in the Birman empire, it is striking to observe the analogy which some of their institutions present to the old feudal tenures and military service of Europe in the eleventh century. No Siamese can wear arms without special permission; but a knife, as in Spain, is in universal use, not being considered as a weapon.*

We should now proceed to the topographical description of the country, but for this we have scarcely any materials. The interior of Siam is for the most part land untravelled by Europeans. It is remarkable, that while the Siamese found no cities or towns except on the borders of their rivers, they form no settlements on their maritime coasts, which are uniformly deserted, and, for at least a day's journey from shore, are destitute of any habitation,—whether through fear of piratical invaders, or from any other cause, does not clearly appear.

Respecting Yuthia, the ancient capital, we have only the vague accounts of the missionaries and older travellers. Tavernier, referring, apparently, to the same city under the name of Siam, says: "Siam, the capital city, where the king keeps his court, is walled about, being about three of our leagues in circuit: it is situated on an island, the river running quite round it, and might easily be brought into every street in the town, if the king would but lay out as much money on that design, as he spends in temples and idols." Kæmpfer states, that the temples are

* The city of Campang-pet (walls of diamond) is celebrated for its mines, which yield excellent steel. Yet, iron is little used. Their boats have only wooden anchors; pegs of bamboo are used for nails in the construction of their houses; and they have neither pins, nails, nor iron tools. There are also mines of tin and lead.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

more elegant than the churches are in Germany. In the eastern part of the city were two squares, surrounded with walls, and separated by a canal, containing numerous monasteries, colonnades, and temples. In a plain to the north-west of the city, stood the *Puka-thon*, a pyramid erected to commemorate a famous victory gained over the king of Pegu. Father Gervaise states, that the foreigners' quarter was full of brick houses, and that the parts occupied by the natives contained handsome paved streets.*

Louvok, another populous town on the great river, (supposed to be the Loeach of Marco Polo,) is probably Lou-oo, the favourite residence of Chaw Narayn. Above the capital also, we find mentioned, Porseloc, the chief town of an ancient principality of that name, famous for its dye-woods and valuable gums.† The names of other towns are given by Loubére as occurring on the Mei-nam between Yuthia and Metak, which is stated to be the frontier town of the Tay-noï, beyond which the country belongs to the Great Tays. From Bankok to Yuthia, the banks of the Mei-nam are believed to be populous. "Lower down, they are mere deserts, swarming with monkeys, phosphoric flies, and mosquitoes."‡

* By the Birmans, the city of Siam is known under the name of Dwarawuddy; the proper native name is See-y-thaa. See p. 6. It is said to stand in lat. 14° 5′ N., long. 100° 25′ E. Although of great extent, it now contains but a small population.—HAMILTON'S *Gazetteer*.

† Malte Brun, vol. iii. p. 386. On the frontier of Pegu, there is said to be a considerable town called Cambouri, the seat of a great commerce in eagle-wood, ivory, and rhinoceros' horns, and from this place comes the finest varnish. Ligor, a town on the western coast of the Gulf of Siam, in lat. 8° 30′, gives name to a province still in the possession of the Siamese, which yields a very pure tin called *calin*.

‡ Malte Brun, vol. iii. p. 383.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

About ninety miles N. of the frontier of Lower Siam, in lat. 20° 30′, according to Loubére, is Chiamay or Jamahay, the capital of a state called Yangoma. Thus far, the Mei-nam is said to be navigable by boats. This is apparently the province of Yun-shan; or possibly, the Yuns may be inhabitants of the *shan*, or mountainous region, bordering on the country of Chiamay or Saymmay, where there is said to be a lake two hundred miles in extent, bounded by vast forests and impassable marshes.* In this lake, according to Mendez Pinto, the Mei-nam has its rise; and Father Gervaise places its source, on hearsay evidence, in a great lake in the country of Laos, which must be in this direction. Kæmpfer states, however, that the Mei-nam was believed to have its source in the mountains of Tibet.† He describes it as dividing itself into three arms, one of which flows through Cambodia, another through Siam, and a third through Pegu, into the sea. That the Mei-nam and the Mei-kong mingle their waters by the Anan-myeet, seems to be ascertained; and another branch of the Mei-nam, called the *Bomeik-myeet*, flowing westward, may perhaps find its way into the Thaluayn.‡ We have already suggested that possibly, in the rainy season, the waters of these great rivers may unite to form a periodical inland sea,

* See p. 6, *note*.

† M. Loubére also considers the story of its origin in a lake as doubtful, "by reason it is so small at its entrance into the kingdom of Siam, that, for about fifty leagues, it carries only little boats capable of holding no more than four or five persons at most. At the city of Laconcevan (the mountain of heaven), the Meinam receives another considerable river, which also comes from the north, and is likewise called Meinam, a name common to all great rivers." —LOUBERE, fol. p. 4. May not *this* river proceed from a lake? Or perhaps, the lake is southward of their confluence.

‡ The authors of the Universal History, on the authority of M. Loubére and the journal of two Chinese, speak of the junction

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

similar to that which is produced by the expansion of the great South American rivers in the centre of Paraguay. But time will resolve these conjectures.

The Mei-nam, or mother-water, is a name not restricted to the river of Siam; a circumstance which contributes not a little to perplex the geography of these regions. That which we now speak of, seems, however, pre-eminently entitled to the appellation: it is certainly one of the most considerable in eastern Asia. The inundation takes place in September. In December, the waters decline. It differs from the Ganges, in swelling first in its upper part, owing its inundations principally to the rains which fall among the mountains. The inundation, as has been already mentioned, is most remarkable in the centre of the kingdom. The operations of the rice-harvest are conducted (as in Paraguay) chiefly in boats.* The water of the Mei-nam, though muddy, is agreeable and wholesome. The banks are uniformly a rich and deep alluvial soil, in which scarcely a stone or pebble is to be found. The soil of the mountains, which are granite, is dry and barren.

Siam may be considered as an immense valley formed by a double chain of mountains, in some places of a great river (meaning the Mei-kong) with the Mei-nam. They also mention two other considerable rivers which fall into the great Mei-nam near its mouth. One, on the western side, rises near the city of Kambui, (Cambouri?) and divides into two branches, the more northerly of which joins the Mei-nam a little above Yuthia, while the other branch falls into the sea near Pipila. The river, on the eastern side, has its source a little above the city of Karazema on the frontiers of Laos, and passing by Kanayot and Perion, enters the sea at Banplasoy near the eastern mouth of the Mei-nam.—*Univ. Hist.* vol. vi. p. 254. The Mei-nam falls into the Gulf of Siam by three mouths, but the Packnam branch only is navigable.

* See Mod. Trav. Brazil, vol. ii. p. 127, *note*.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

between fourscore and a hundred leagues in breadth, and extending on each side of the gulf in the form of a horse-shoe. The western range of mountains which stretch down through the peninsula of Malacca, have, from the gulf, a singularly picturesque appearance, thus described by Mr. Finlayson :—

"An extensive low ground, covered with thick woods, stretches along the sea-coast. We could here see abundance of palms growing; the Palmyra appeared to be the most common. Appearances would lead us to infer this low ground to be well inhabited. The lofty mountains in the back ground render this country singularly picturesque. Sam-rayot, signifying three hundred peaks, the name by which the Siamese designate this tract, is expressive of its appearance. The mountain ranges run in the direction of north and south. They are very elevated, extremely rugged on their flanks, as well as summits, projecting into innumerable bold conical peaks. It is perhaps a singular circumstance, considering that the direction of these mountain ranges is from north to south, that they are steepest towards the east, while of mountains so distributed, it has been observed, that the steepest acclivities lie towards the west. Another singular circumstance in the appearance of these mountains, is the insulated situation of some of the loftiest peaks, or rather mountains. Three of the latter are perfectly conical, lofty, and very steep, and their position is perfectly insular, miles intervening between them and the mountain ranges from which they stand detached. They are situated upon the flat, apparently alluvial ground already mentioned. The greater hardness of the granitic mass in these, will hardly account for this circumstance."

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

The eastern shores of the Gulf are bordered by innumerable groupes of islands, composed, for the most part, of mountainous masses, and all of them are of considerable elevation. They are all covered with vegetation, and have a picturesque aspect; but it does not appear that any of them have ever been occupied. "The want of a constant supply of water must ever be a principal objection; while their steep forms and scanty soil forbid every attempt at cultivation. In many, the summits are rounded; in others, peaked and rugged. In fact," continues Mr. Finlayson, "we here appear to have ascended the tops of a range of mountains, in structure partaking of the nature of rocks both of the primitive and the secondary kind. The direction of this partly submerged range is like that on the peninsula of Malacca, from north to south, bending a little from east to west. The breadth of the range is considerable. The islands form a continuous narrow belt extending along the coast, in this respect somewhat similar to those on the east coast of the Bay of Bengal. There, however, we observe a stupendous parallel chain of mountains, extending from one extremity of the peninsula to the other; whilst here, the most remarkable circumstance is the extreme lowness of the continental land. It is an extensive allu-

vion, on a level with the sea, on which we look in vain for hill or elevation of any sort. At the distance of a few miles, the trees only, and not the ground, are visible from the deck, whilst the islands, many of them rising above 1000 feet, are to be seen many miles off. The occurrence of granite on this, the first of the series, was rather unexpected. This granite presents several varieties. It is less perfectly crystalised, and more granular, than that we found on the western coast

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

of the peninsula of Malacca. Many of the specimens contain hornblende; and on the summit of the hill, there is a red granite, which breaks into brick-like fragments. The lower granite is uncommonly hard, and breaks with much difficulty."*

At the head of the gulf, a mountainous country divides the valley of Siam from Cambodia. This is the province of Chantibond, which originally belonged to the kingdom of Cambodia; but, on the partition of that beautiful country, was seized upon by the Cochin Chinese, and at length was annexed, by Pe-ya-tac, to the empire of Siam, of which it is stated to constitute one of the richest and most valuable provinces. Mr. Finlayson describes it as "singularly beautiful and picturesque, diversified by lofty mountains, extensive forests, and fertile valleys and plains. The passage thence to Cambodia is of short distance, a ridge of mountains dividing the two countries. It possesses a good and convenient harbour, well protected by numerous beautiful islands in front. The river is obstructed in a great measure at its mouth, but affords convenient and safe navigation to small vessels and boats. It once possessed an extensive and profitable

* Mr. Finlayson supposes, that the base, both of the islands and of the bay formed by them, is granite. "Extensive masses," he says, "of a coarse-grained granite, abounding with plates of gray and black mica, in parallel *laminæ*, are to be seen at low water at several points on the shores of the islands. This rock presents a rough, horizontal surface, never ascending into peaks, and rarely rising above high-water mark. On this rock are superposed, collaterally and often alternating with each other, quartz rock and granular limestone, both of them varying in appearance, and containing a considerable proportion of calcareous matter. The direction of the strata is from E. to W., dipping to the north. On the smaller islands, the quartz is intersected by retiform veins of iron ore. Caves of considerable extent occur in the slaty quartz."—See FINLAYSON'S *Mission*, pp. 90, 1; 275—7.

Digitized by Google. Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

commerce, which has been upon the decline since the place fell into the hands of the Siamese. The produce of the country is annually removed to Bankok, and the commerce with foreign ships is prohibited. The principal productions are pepper, the cultivation of which may be increased almost to an unlimited extent, benzoin, lac, ivory, agila-wood,* rhinoceros' horns, hides of cows, buffaloes, deer, &c., gamboge, some cardamoms, and precious stones, the latter of inferior quality. The forests abound in excellent timber, and afford the best materials for ship-building: accordingly, many junks are built at this place. Many of the islands in front of the port, and particularly that called Bangga-cha, produce abundance of precious stones. The island Sa-ma-ra-yat, to the east of the harbour, is said to produce gold. In the former of these islands, there is a safe and convenient harbour. At a short distance from the coast, there is a very high mountain, called Bomba-soi, commanding an extensive view both of Chantibond and of Cambodia.

"The amount of the population is uncertain,

* The agila-wood of Chantibond is equalled only by that of Cochin China. The odoriferous principle, which gives it value, resides in a black, thick, concrete oil, resembling tar or resin while burning, and it is probably a combination of an essential oil with resin. It is disposed in numerous cells, and gives to the wood a blackish, dotted appearance. As it is found in comparatively few trees, and those only which exhibit signs of decay, it has naturally been supposed to be the effect of disease. Probably, it is occasioned by the puncture of some insect. The Siamese name the substance *nuga-mai:* it is also called *mâi-hoâm*. The consumption of it is considerable, even in Siam; but the greater part is exported to China, where it is used in the service of the temples, and in the incineration of the corpses of persons of distinction. The powder, mixed with a gummy substance, is laid over small sticks, which burn with a slow and smothered flame, giving out a feeble but grateful perfume.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

some estimating it at nearly one million, while others reckon it under half that number. It is composed of Chinese, Cochin-Chinese, Cambodians, and Siamese; but by far the greater number are Chinese, in whose hands are all the wealth and the richest products of the country. There are also from two to three hundred native Christians in the place, who, like those in other parts of Siam, are placed under the care of the bishop of Metellopolis, Joseph Florens, a Frenchman. The place is governed by a man of Chinese extraction, appointed by the king of Siam."

To the south of Cape Liant, which bounds on that side the province of Chantibond, the eastern coast of the Gulf of Siam takes a south-easterly direction as far as Cape Cambodia. Two-thirds of this tract, 300 miles in length, are a sandy desert; but here, near the mouth of a deep but narrow river, a small independent state was founded in 1705, by a Chinese merchant named Kiang-si, which for some time prospered under a flourishing trade, presenting the phenomenon of a commercial republic, a Chinese Pisa or Ragusa, at the eastern extremity of Asia.

"Departing," says Le Poivre, "from the peninsula of Malacca, I fell in with a small territory, known, in the maritime charts, by the name of Ponthiamas. Surrounded on all sides with despotism, this charming country, about fifty years ago, was uncultivated and almost destitute of inhabitants. A Chinese merchant who frequented these coasts, being a man of intelligence and genius, resolved on a colonisation of these parts. He hired a number of labourers, partly Chinese and partly from the adjacent states, and so skilfully ingratiated himself with the neighbouring princes, that they assigned him a guard for his protection. In the course of his voyage to Batavia and

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

the Philippines, he borrowed from the Europeans their art of defence and fortification. With regard to the internal police, he gave the preference to the Chinese. The profits of his commerce soon enabled him to raise ramparts, sink fosses, and provide artillery; these precautions secured him from the surrounding barbarians. He distributed his lands among his labourers, without the least reservation in the shape of fines, duties, or taxes, and he provided his colonists also with all sorts of instruments of husbandry.

" His country became the resort of every industrious man who wished to settle there: his ports were open to all. The woods were cleared; the grounds were sown with rice; canals, cut from the rivers, watered their fields, and plentiful harvests supplied their own wants and afforded means of commerce. The neighbouring states call him king, a title he despises; he pretends to no sovereignty, but that of doing good,—and certainly merits a very noble title, that of friend to mankind. The neighbouring districts, astonished at this abundance, flock to his magazines, which, notwithstanding the great fertility of Cochin China, are the granary of these eastern Asiatic states." *

It were a pity to destroy so pleasing a picture, even if tinged with a little romance. It is clear, that a lucrative commerce was established here; but its prosperity must have been of short continuance, as, in 1720, Hamilton found the city in ruins. It had been taken and plundered in 1717, by the Siamese. It was then a place of considerable trade, and it is said, that not less than 200 tons of ivory, ready for exportation, were destroyed.

* Pennant's Outlines of the Globe, vol. iii. p. 52.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

The river on which the town of Ponthiamas is seated, communicates, in the season of inundation, with the Meikong, by which means commodities are brought to this mouth, instead of the Cambodia branch, which is said to be of very troublesome navigation, from the number of low islands and sand banks which obstruct the channel.*

The valley of Cambodia is the last of those vast longitudinal basins into which this region is divided, and here we enter on the confines of the Anamitic empire.

* Probably, the Bassak is referred to. See p. 333, *note*.

END OF SIAM.

Digitized by Google

Original from
UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

Digitized by Google

Original from
UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

ANAM.

Digitized by Google

Original from
UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

Digitized by Google

Original from
UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

ANAM.

[An empire, comprising Tong-kin, Cochin China, Tsiampa, Cambodia, and Laos; extending from lat. 9° to 23°; bounded on the N. by China; on the E. and S. by the Chinese Sea; on the W. by Siam and unknown country.]

The country of Anam (Aynam, An-nan, or Onam), which originally consisted of Tong-kin,* is recorded to have been at one time comprised, together with Cochin China, Cambodia, and Tsiampa, within the Chinese empire; but, on the Mogul invasion of China in the thirteenth century, the Chinese governors of the southern provinces took the opportunity of setting up the standard of independence. In this manner several distinct kingdoms were created, the sovereigns of which, however, continued for many years to acknowledge a nominal vassalage to the throne of China. Tong-kin is stated to have separated from China in 1368. Its princes gradually assumed a greater degree of independence, and about 1553, are asserted to have subdued Cochin China. The dynasty of Lé ruled the kingdom for many ages with all the wisdom and benignity that despotism can admit of. But one of the

* There is no end to the arbitrary variations introduced in our geographical orthography. In Hamilton's Gazetteer, this word is written Tunquin. In a recent map by Mr. Wild, it is Ton-king. Mr. Barrow writes it Tung-quin; Lieut. White, Tonquin, which is adopted by the Translator of Malte Brun; but we are told that the word is Don-kin, the "Court of the East." There is certainly no good reason for our adopting the French *q*, which answers to our *k*; and it is probable that Tong-kin comes near the true pronunciation.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

great officers of the crown, the *shooa* (*chua*, or *shua-rua*), answering, apparently, to the Mahratta peishwas, or the ancient mayors of the palace in France,—having placed himself at the head of the army, succeeded in making the office hereditary, and in reducing the *bova* (*boa*) or king to the shadow of a monarch. The subsequent history of Tong-kin presents only a confused succession of assassinations and revolts, and a perpetual fluctuation of boundaries.

Cochin China, or Southern Anam, is said to be indebted for its present population to an unsuccessful rebellion of a Tongkinese prince against his sovereign, somewhat less than two centuries ago. The insurgents, being totally routed, fled before the victorious troops of the king of Tongkin into Cochin China, then inhabited by the *Lois* or *Laos*, a timid and peaceful race, who, at the approach of these intruders, retired into the mountains of Tsiampa, abandoning their country without a struggle, if we may believe the story, to the Tongkinese fugitives. In a very short time, the latter had spread themselves over the northern section of this fertile country; nor was it many years ere they had penetrated southward as far as the borders of Cambodia, where they built the city of Sai-gon, and subsequently that of Don-nai. In somewhat less than forty years, they had gained possession of the whole of Cochin China, and had made successful inroads into Cambodia. There, however, they were opposed by a more warlike people than the Laos; nor were the Cambodians finally subdued by the Anamese until the reign of the monarch who still occupied the throne in 1820.

The Cochin Chinese kingdom soon became one of the most powerful and prosperous in Eastern Asia. Its fertile soil, its important line of coast, and a mild

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

government, favoured its rapid improvement; and about the middle of the eighteenth century, it had attained its zenith. "The first six kings of the Tong-kinese race were," we are told, "greatly beloved by their subjects, whom they governed in the manner of the ancient patriarchs, looking upon their people as their children, and by their own example prompting them to habits of simplicity, industry, and frugality. But the subsequent discovery of the gold and silver mines, and the easy and frequent communications which their commerce had opened with the Chinese, were the means of introducing luxury and effeminacy to the court of Anam, and of inflating the minds of its sovereigns, in imitation of the *mighty monarchs* of the *celestial empire*. Their courtiers, finding their interest in flattering them, bestowed the blasphemous epithet of *King of Heaven* upon their infatuated masters, who readily adopted this arrogant title: by edict, its use became general in their own country, and by courtesy, in imitation of the slavish adoration paid to other eastern potentates, was confirmed to them by the politic diplomatists of tributary and less powerful states, who occasionally visited the court. It would be absurd to suppose that the *King of Heaven* could be lodged and attended like the common kings of the earth; and we find Vous-tsoi, the immediate ancestor of the present sovereign, inhabiting, according to the seasons, his winter, summer, and autumnal palaces, and plunging into the greatest luxury and excess. Even the gold mines were not a sufficient resource against this torrent of extravagance; new taxes were levied, new impositions devised; and these exactions were 'wrung from the hard hands of peasants,' by force and tyrannical oppression, as their contributions had now ceased to be voluntary. The prince, sur-

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

rounded by flattering sycophants, who guarded every avenue to the royal ear, was consequently ignorant of the growing evils which his mal-administration had produced. With astonishing infatuation, he abandoned himself to his pleasures, and his government to his insidious courtiers, who, taking advantage of exemption from punishment, robbed the people, and plunged the nation into an abyss of poverty and distress. This catastrophe was hastened by a general corruption of manners, communicated by the empoisoned streams which flowed from the court and capital, and spread their baneful influence over all ranks and conditions of the people.

" Notwithstanding the errors and defects of this sovereign, he is represented as having been of a mild disposition, and secretly attached to the simple and primitive manners of his ancestors; fond of his subjects, always calling them his children; friendly to the doctrines of Christianity, and treating its ministers with great respect and indulgence."

The natural consequences of this state of things were soon exhibited in a rebellion, followed by a civil war, which for nearly thirty years agitated the country. The details of this revolution are tolerably authentic. In the year 1774, in the 35th year of the reign of Caung-shung, the father of the late King Gia-laong, the rebellion commenced in the city of Quin-hone, the capital of the division of Chang, headed by three brothers. The eldest, whose name was Yinyac, was a wealthy merchant, who carried on an extensive commerce with China and Japan; Long-niang, the second brother, was a general officer, or war-mandarin of high rank; and the third was a priest. Their first care was to get possession of the person of the king, which they effected, and put him to death,

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

together with all of the royal family who fell into their hands. The city of Saigon, in the province of Don-nai, was supposed to be favourable to the cause of the deposed sovereign; an army was therefore marched against it, the walls were levelled to the ground, and 20,000 of its inhabitants put to the sword. In their arrangements for the future government of this extensive country, it was determined that Yinyac should possess the southern and central divisions of Chang and Don-nai; Long-niang, that of Hué, bordering on Tongkin; and the youngest brother was to be high-priest of all Cochin China.

Long-niang was soon involved in hostilities with the King of Tongkin, then a tributary to the Emperor of China, and defeated him in battle. The vanquished king fled to Pekin, and Tongkin was overrun by the victorious usurper. Kien-Long sent an army of 100,000 men to replace the King of Tongkin on his throne; but Long-niang so skilfully harassed the Chinese army, laying waste the country in their line of march, that they retired in distress for provisions before they had reached the frontiers of Tongkin. The consequence was a treaty, whereby the Chinese emperor recognised and confirmed Long-niang as sovereign of Cochin China and Tongkin, which were to be held as tributary to the emperor.*

* Mr. Barrow gives a truly curious account of the result of this Chinese expedition. Foo-chang-tong, the commander, was so miserably harrassed in his retreat by the usurper, that no fewer than 50,000 men are said to have perished by famine and the sword, without any general battle having been fought. To prevent inevitable disgrace, he resolved therefore to open a negotiation with the usurper; but Long-niang assumed the tone of a conqueror. Under these circumstances, the Chinese general had recourse to the bold expedient of transmitting to the court of Pekin an account of the unparalleled success of his expedition; the arms of the em-

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

At the period of the rebellion, there resided at the court of Cochin China a French emissary of the name of Adran, who styled himself the apostolic vicar of Cochin China. Caung-shung had held him in so high esteem as to place under his tuition his only son, the heir to the throne. Adran, on the first burst of the revolt, saw that the only hope of safety was in flight. The king was already in the power of the rebels, but the queen, the young prince, with his wife and infant son, and one sister, by Adran's assistance, effected their escape. They took refuge in a forest, where they lay concealed for several months. When the enemy retired, they made the best of their way to Saigon, where the prince was crowned under the name

peror had been uniformly victorious; but he bore honourable testimony, at the same time, to the valour of the enemy, and to the justice and reasonableness of his pretensions to the throne, which the former possessor had *relinquished;* and dwelt on the universal esteem in which he was held by the people; giving it as his opinion, that Long-niang should be invited to Pekin, to receive the investiture of the Tongkin crown, and suggesting that a mandarinate would amply satisfy the dispossessed Tongkinese prince. The whole scheme succeeded, and an invitation in due form was sent down to Long-niang to proceed to Pekin. This wary general, however, thinking it might be a trick of the viceroy to get possession of his person, remained in doubt as to what course he ought to pursue. On consulting one of his confidential generals, it was concluded between them, that this officer should proceed to the capital of China as his representative, and personate the new king of Tongkin and Cochin China. He was received at the court of Pekin with all due honours, loaded with the usual presents, and confirmed in his title to the united kingdoms, which were in future to be considered as tributary to the emperor of China. On the return of this mock king to Hué, Long-niang was greatly puzzled how to act. But seeing that the affair could not long remain a secret with so many living witnesses, he caused his friend and the whole of his suite to be put to death, as the surest and perhaps the only means of preventing the trick which he had so successfully played on the emperor of China from being discovered. This event happened in 1779.—BARROW, p. 254.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

of his father, Caung-shung. Some efforts were made, under Adran's direction, to re-establish him on his throne; but, after many unsuccessful attempts, the king was obliged to leave his country and take refuge in Siam, where he was hospitably received. In the meantime, Adran, to whom, at his earnest solicitation, he had intrusted his son, embarked for Pondicherry, and thence sailed for France, where he arrived with his royal charge in 1787. The young prince was presented at court, and treated with every mark of respect; and the project of the missionary was so highly approved, that, in the course of a few months, a treaty of alliance, offensive and defensive, was drawn up and concluded between Louis XVI. and the king of Cochin China, (signed on the part of the latter by the young prince,) by which his most Christian majesty engaged to lend Caung-shung effectual assistance in recovering his throne. Adran was created bishop of Cochin China, and honoured with the appointment of ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary.

Matters being thus concluded, Adran and his charge again set sail for Pondicherry. From the Mauritius, a powerful armament was to have been sent out; but untoward events* retarded its operations

* The untoward circumstances alluded to, are detailed by Mr. Barrow. At the time of the bishop's arrival at Pondicherry, Madame de Vienne, a celebrated beauty, was the mistress of Conway, the governor, and had obtained an absolute ascendancy over him. Piqued at Adran's refusal to visit her, and still more enraged at some expressions which he was reported to have used in reprobation of the general's licentiousness, she resolved to have her revenge by frustrating the expedition. She managed so well to rouse Conway's jealousy of Adran, that he despatched a fast-sailing vessel to the Mauritius, with directions to suspend the armament till further orders should be received from Versailles. "Had not this event taken place," remarks Mr. Barrow, "it is difficult to say what the consequences of such a treaty might have been to our

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

until the French revolution finally put a stop to the expedition.

Adran, however, was not to be deterred from his undertaking. He had carried with him from France, several officers, who were to have held appointments under the government. With some of these as volunteers, the bishop and the young prince embarked on board a merchant-vessel for Cape St. James. On reaching the coast, they learned that the king, availing himself of dissensions among the brother usurpers, had repossessed himself of Saigon, where Adran and his charge joined him in 1790. The greater part of the first year was occupied in fortifying Saigon, in recruiting and disciplining an army, and in collecting and equipping a fleet. In the following year, the usurper Long-niang died at Hué, leaving a son twelve years of age, to succeed him on the throne of Tongkin and Hué. The ratification of his title to the kingdom of Tongkin by the emperor, had been the cause of hostilities between the two brothers, in which Yinyac had been constantly worsted, and his dominions contracted. In 1792, Caung-shung attacked the fleet of Yinyac in the harbour of Quinhone, and either captured or destroyed the greater part. Yinyac did not long survive this defeat, and his son, Tai-saun, succeeded to his government.

In the year 1796, Caung-shung resolved to attack the capital by land. Tai-saun was enabled to bring against him an army of a hundred thousand men ; but the king, supported by his French officers, completely routed it with a very inferior force, and gained possession of the whole as far as Turon Bay.

Indian possessions and to the trade of the East India company with China; but it is sufficiently evident that it had for its object the destruction of both."—*Voyage to Cochin China*, p. 266.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

Bishop Adran had, in the mean time, become the oracle and guide of the king. "Under his auspices, the country was greatly improved; and during a short peace, previous to the final termination of the war, he established a manufactory of saltpetre, opened roads, cut canals, held out rewards for the propagation of the silk-worm, caused large tracts of land to be cleared for the cultivation of the sugar-cane, established manufactories for the preparation of pitch, tar, rosin, &c.; opened mines of iron, and constructed smelting-furnaces and foundries for cannon. Adran translated into the Anam language, a system of European military tactics, for the use of the army. Naval arsenals were established, and a large navy, principally consisting of gun-boats, galleys, &c. was built and equipped. Under his direction, a reformation was effected in the system of jurisprudence; he abolished several species of punishments that were disproportionate to the crimes to which they were annexed; he established public schools, and compelled parents to send their children to them at the age of four years; he drew up commercial regulations, built bridges, caused buoys and sea-marks to be laid down in all the dangerous parts of the coast, and surveys to be made of the principal bays and harbours. The officers of the navy were instructed in naval tactics by Frenchmen; his army was divided into regular regiments; military schools were established, and the officers taught the science of gunnery. Unfortunately for the country, the death of Adran occurred shortly after this; and with him expired many of the wholesome laws, institutions, and regulations established by him."

Adrian died in the year 1800, and was interred at Saigon with all the pomp and ceremonies prescribed

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

by the Anamese religion. The heir-apparent, his pupil, died shortly after.

The young usurper of Hué, however, still kept possession of that city and part of Tongkin ; but in 1802,* Caung-shung, at the head of a formidable armament, dislodged him ; and in 1804, he was acknowledged by the emperor of China as the undisputed sovereign of the whole country, the name of which he changed on this occasion from Anam to Viet-nam.

Caung-shung died in February 1820, in the sixty-third year of his age, and was succeeded by his second son, who assumed the title of *Minh-menh* (or *Ming-meng*,—shining providence). The character of this sovereign, who is compared by Mr. Barrow to Peter the Great of Russia, certainly exhibits a very extraordinary combination of talent, energy, and courage. At one time an outcast, forced to flee from the hand of the usurper and the assassin, and to suffer the keenest pangs of adversity, he was nevertheless able, in the course of ten or twelve years, to recover the whole of his possessions, and to extend them by the acquisition of Tongkin. He undoubtedly owed much, however, in every point of view, to the instructions, the talents, and the efficient aid of Adran, whom he venerated almost to adoration, distinguishing him by an epithet bestowed on Confucius alone,—"the illustrious master."

* In 1800, the military forces of Caung-shung are said to have amounted to 113,000 men ; viz. 24 squadrons of buffalo troops, 6000 ; 16 battalions of elephants (200 animals), 8000 ; 30 regiments of artillery, 15,000 ; 24 regiments trained in the European manner, 30,000 ; infantry with matchlocks, 42,000 ; guards, trained to European tactics, 12,000 ; exclusive of a marine amounting to 26,800. Total, 139,800.—Barrow, p. 283.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

Mr. Barrow portrays the character of this monarch in glowing colours. "Caung-shung," he says, "is represented to be a complete soldier. He is said to esteem the name of general far more than that of sovereign. At the head of his army, he is cheerful and good-humoured, polite and attentive to all the officers under his command. His memory is so correct that he is said to know by name the greater part of his army. He takes uncommon pleasure in conversing with his soldiers, and in talking over their adventures and exploits. He makes particular inquiries after their wives and children, whether the latter go regularly to school, how they mean to dispose of them when grown up; and, in short, enters with a degree of interest into a minute detail of their domestic concerns.

"His conduct to foreigners is affable. To the French officers in his service he pays the most marked attention, and treats them with the greatest politeness, familiarity, and good humour. On all his hunting excursions and other parties of pleasure, one of these officers is always invited to attend.* He openly declares his great veneration for the doctrines of Christianity, and tolerates this religion, and, indeed, all others in his dominions. He observes a most scrupulous regard to the maxims of filial piety, as laid down in the works of Confucius; and humbles himself in the presence of his mother, who is still living, as a child before its master. With the works of the

* "Though no apparent alteration took place in his conduct towards the French officers, yet, the French character is said to have suffered greatly in his estimation from the moment he was made acquainted with the outrageous and inhuman treatment which the unfortunate family experienced from a licentious and savage rabble."

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

most eminent Chinese authors, he is well acquainted ; and through the translations into the Chinese character of the *Encyclopédie* by the bishop Adran, he has acquired no inconsiderable knowledge of European arts and sciences, among which he is most attached to such as relate to navigation and ship-building. It is stated, on what appears to be good authority, that, in order to obtain a thorough knowledge of the practice as well as the theory of European naval architecture, he purchased a Portuguese vessel for the sole purpose of taking it to pieces, plank by plank, with his own hands, fitting in a new piece of similar shape and dimensions to the old one he removed, till every beam, timber, knee, and plank had been replaced by new ones of his own construction, and the ship thus completely renovated.

" The energy of his mind is not less vigorous than the activity of his corporal faculties. He is represented, in fact, as the mainspring of every movement that takes place in his extensive and flourishing kingdom. Intendant of the ports and arsenals, master-shipwright of the dock-yard, and chief engineer of all his works, nothing is attempted to be undertaken without his advice and instructions. In the former, not a nail is driven without first consulting him, nor a gun mounted in the latter but by his orders. He not only enters into the most minute detail by drawing up instructions, but actually sees them executed himself."

In his diet, he was singularly temperate, not taking Chinese wine or any kind of spirituous liquors, and contenting himself with a very small portion of animal food. A little fish, rice, vegetables, and fruit, with tea and light pastry, constituted the chief articles of his diet. Like a true Chinese, descended, as he boasted,

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

from the imperial family of Ming, he always ate alone, not permitting either his wife or any part of his family to sit down at the same table with himself. His mode of life was most methodical. He rose at six, and bathed; at seven, held a levee of mandarins; then proceeded to the naval arsenal, to inspect the works; between twelve and one took his first meal, consisting of a little boiled rice and dried fish; at two, retired to take what might be called his siesta; at five, gave audience to naval and military officers and heads of departments; at midnight, supped and passed an hour with his family, and between two and three retired to his bed. In stature, he was somewhat above the middle size, his features regular and agreeable, his complexion ruddy and sunburnt. Such was Caung-shung II., one of the most extraordinary personages, assuredly, that ever occupied an Asiatic throne.

PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY.

THE Anamese empire, according to its present limits, extends from Cambodia Point, in lat. 8° 40′ to the northern confines of Tongkin, which reach within a very few miles of the Tropic, and from long. 105° to 109° 24′ E. From Cape Avarella, its easternmost point, it extends westward about a hundred and fifty miles, but its average breadth is about a hundred. It comprises the following grand divisions:—

	Lat.	Lat.
1. The Kingdom of Tongkin, lying between	23° 30′ and	17° 30′ N.
2. The Province of Hué, ———	17° 30′ and	15°
3. ——— Chang, ———	15° and	12°
4. ——— Donnai, ———	12° and	8° 40′

These grand divisions are subdivided into districts, the present names and limits of which are not ascertained with any accuracy. Hué and Chang would

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

seem to include nearly the whole of Cochin China Proper;* while Don-nai comprises the little state of Tsiampa and the conquered parts of Cambodia.† The city of Hué is the present capital of the empire.

Within these limits there appear to be no fewer than five considerable rivers; namely, the Sang-koi, or river of Tongkin, that of Hué, that of Sai-gon, the Mei-kong, and the river of Ponthiamas. The river of Tongkin, on which Kescho the capital is situated, at the distance of 120 miles from its mouths, has its source in the Chinese province of Yun-nan: traversing the kingdom in a south-easterly direction, it fertilises a great tract of country, and falls into the Bay of Tongkin in about lat. 20°. Owing to the sand-bank which obstructs the entrance, it is not now navigable for vessels of more than 200 tons burden. Cochin China Proper has no navigable river of any magnitude. The river of Hué has but a very short course—and, although broad, being but shallow, is not of extensive utility as regards navigation. Its estuary, however, forms a fine harbour, and, in the south-west monsoon, ships of 200 tons burden may enter and quit

* "The Japanese call the country westward of China, *Cotchin Djina*, and the Europeans have followed them."—MALTE BRUN, vol. iii. p. 272. The Chinese call Cochin China Proper, Tchan-tching; Tongkin is known to them under the name of Nyan-nan, and Tsiampa is called Tchin-la.—MARSDEN'S *Marco Polo*, note 1,164.

† The northern division of Cochin China is stated to comprise the province of Dinhkhat (Dingoě), Kwangbin (or Quambin), a mountainous district, Dinhwi, and Hué. The southern comprises, besides Chang (or Kyam), which skirts the Bay of Turon, the provinces of Don-nai, Nyat-lang, Quan-hia (or Kwangsia), Quin-nong (Kwin-yong, Quinhone, Quinam), containing the ancient capital of the same name, situated on the bay of Shin-shen, Fuyen (Foy or Phayn), and Ran-ran. Tongkin is also subdivided into eleven provinces.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

it in safety. In the opposite monsoon, it is almost inaccessible. "In regard to harbours, Cochin China is singularly fortunate. Within the six degrees and a half of latitude which intervene between Cape St. James and the Bay of Turon, there are no fewer than nine of the finest harbours in the world, accessible with every wind, safe to approach, and affording the most complete protection." *

There is no shore which suffers more perceptible encroachments from the sea, than that of Cochin China. M. Poivre found that, between the years 1744 and 1749, it had gained 190 feet.† A range of mountains stretches down in a line parallel with the coast. The rocks in the southern provinces are unstratified masses, generally granite, and sometimes with perpendicular fissures. Cape St. James, which is the first land made on coming from the south, (lat. 10° 16′ 41″, N., long. 107° 45′ E.‡,) is the extremity of a ridge of hills about 300 feet in height, forming the left bank of the Sai-gon river. It is seen at a great distance. The land on the opposite side of the river is extremely low,‖ and an extensive sand-bank lies before it, stretching for several miles. A few miles within this point is a fine, spacious, semi-circular bay, called the Bay of Cocoa-nuts. The rocks are granite and syenite, intersected with small veins of rich iron ore.§ Into this bay, the Gagn-jai, the Cai-mep, and other small

* Asiat. Jour. vol. xix. p. 122.

† The general appearance of the coast of Tongkin indicates a retrogression of the sea.

‡ White, p. 58. M. Dyot made it 10° 15′ 48″ N. lat. and 107° 5′ 51″ E. long.

‖ A mud flat commences from Cambodia Point, and gradually increases in breadth till it terminates at the mouth of the Donnai river, where it extends into the sea about four leagues.

§ Finlayson, p. 295.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

rivers fall. It is not considered as very safe in the S.W. monsoon, though the ground is good, but in the opposite season, the harbour is excellent.

The coast of Cochin China, from Cape St. James to Turon Bay, is singularly bold and picturesque. A continuous chain of lofty mountains stretches in the direction of the coast, (that is S.E. and N.W.) throughout this tract, at a very short distance from the shores, which are in general abrupt, bold, and precipitous, or begirt with a narrow sandy beach. "The ranges of hills are numerous, and for the most part are seen to rise above each other in gradual succession as they recede from the sea. Their abrupt, acuminated, and ridgy forms, their sterile summits, their steep flanks, leave little room to doubt that the greater part, and the whole of the western half of these mountains, are granitic. Near to the middle of the chain, they become less bold and less elevated, while their forms are rounded at top. With this change, increased fertility of the soil and a country better adapted for the support of man come into view. Here, human industry struggles against the inequality of the soil. Numerous fields are observed to occupy the sides of the hills, and a vast fleet of boats plying in the open sea, indicates the existence of a numerous population. Some of the islands along the coast are also cultivated in a similar manner." The bay of Turon is completely land-locked, and were its entrance as easy as its interior is safe, it would be justly numbered among the best of harbours.

From Turon to Hué, a passage of about twenty hours, the coast still preserves its rugged, bold, and picturesque character. The chain of mountains is continued; the ridges bear the same forms and direc-

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

tion, but increase in altitude, and the granitic peaks become more acuminated. The coast now wears a more sterile aspect; no signs of vegetation enliven the sandy shores, and the whole country is evidently granitic. But in the middle of the river of Hué-Hane, three miles up, there is an island of sand, from the centre of which rises a large and magnificent alabaster rock, which in several places is perforated quite across. It is called the hill of apes.*

Cochin China includes two distinct regions, the mountains and the plains. The former enjoy a steady, temperate climate, but prove insalubrious to foreigners, owing, it has been supposed, to the quality of the waters. Here are found the savage tribes called *Moys* or *Kemoys*, who are said to worship the sun. The mountains contain some iron mines, which are worked; pure gold is also found, and silver has recently been discovered. But their principal riches consist in their forests, which yield rose-wood, iron-wood (*syderoxylon*), sapan and sandal wood, eagle-wood (*agallochum*), ebony, and *calambac* (*aloëxylum verum*), the most precious of all, on account of the aromatic resin which it yields; also, the tree yielding the gum lac (*croton lacciferum*), various species of dragon's-blood-tree (*dracona ferrea*), the tallow-tree, the teak-tree, and the stately *poon* (*callophyllum*), which furnishes excellent ships' masts; besides cedars, mimosas, walnuts, and (in Cambodia)

* Malte Brun, vol. iii. p. 374. This must be, we apprehend, the range of marble rocks which Mr. Crawfurd met with in his return overland from Hué to the bay of Turon, near the city of Faifo. He represents them as rising almost perpendicularly from the low sand-hills to an elevation of from 3 to 400 feet, without a hill or a mountain within twenty miles of them. They abound, he adds, in *splendid caves*, containing temples and images in honour of Buddha.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

most of the timber trees of India.* The mountains abound with tigers and monkeys. Tsiampa, Malte Brun remarks, is more the country of tigers and of elephants than of men.

The plains are exposed to an insupportable degree of heat in the months of June, July, and August, except in the places which are refreshed by the sea-breezes.† In September, October, and November, the plentiful rains, which fall exclusively in the mountains, swell the numberless rivers with which the country is intersected: in an instant, all the plain is inundated, and the villages, and even the houses, are so many islets. Boats are navigated over the fields and hedges, and the children in small barks go out to fish for the mice, which cling to the branches of the trees. This is the season of inland commerce, large fairs, and popular fêtes; but the cattle are sometimes drowned, and are picked up by the first who finds them. These inundations recur every fifteen or twenty days, and last for three or four. From December to February, the rains are less violent and frequent, but are accompanied with cold winds from the northern mountains. On the coasts, the north-easterly monsoon prevails from May to October, and the south-westerly during the remainder of the year.

The low lands in Cochin China produce rice, areca-nut, betel, tobacco, indigo, a coarse cinnamon (preferred, however, by the Chinese to that of Ceylon), pepper, cardamoms, cotton, silk, and sugar. Most of

* Malte Brun, vol. iii. p. 375. Barrow, p. 345.

† From the beginning of May till the end of August, the thermometer, at Hué, varies from 70° to 90° Fahr. In July and August, it sometimes rises as high as 110°; but this is rarely the case. From September till the end of April, it is from 55° to 75°.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

the tropical fruits are produced in great abundance. The inundated lands generally produce two crops of rice, one of which is reaped in April, the other in May, besides which there is the mountain rice. Maize, millet, several kinds of beans, and pompions are also raised; and wax, honey, ivory, gold dust, and aguila-wood are brought down by the mountaineers. The islands abound in the edible nests of the salangan swallow (*hirundo esculenta*), which are in so much request among the epicures of China. The Cochin Chinese have a small breed of horses; also, mules, asses, goats, and plenty of poultry.

The chain of mountains which encircles Cochin China, reaches so nearly to the Tongkin Gulf, on the northern frontier, as to leave only a narrow defile, which, during the separation of the two kingdoms, was closed by a strong wall. Another ridge, extending eastward, separates Tongkin into two unequal divisions, (the northern being considerably the larger,) and a prolongation of the same ridge is said to separate Laos from Lactho. Another lateral branch of the same plateau separates Tongkin from China. The passes are here also closed with walls, one side of which is guarded by Chinese soldiers, and the other by Tongkinese. This frontier is represented as almost impenetrable. The mountains are very lofty, and rise into sharp peaks. The soil is sandy, gypseous, and ferruginous. That of the plains is in general rich, light, and marshy, watered by numberless streams, and of boundless fertility. The productions are nearly the same as those of Cochin China.* Mulberry-trees are

* Mr. Crawfurd says that Tongkin is the only part of the empire which furnishes the metals. The iron of Tongkin, he says, supplies the whole kingdom, except Saigon, which is furnished by Siam. Gold and silver mines are also found here.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

plentiful; also, the cocoa-nut and other palms, and an inferior sort of tea-plant; but the chief article of cultivation is rice. The grape does not come to maturity. There are neither sheep nor asses, nor hares, but deer of all kinds, goats, hogs, and poultry abound. The horses are a contemptible breed. The buffalo is used for agricultural purposes. The rhinoceros is occasionally discovered, and elephants are very numerous; also tigers, some diminutive bears, and monkeys of every description. The mountainous parts are much infested with rats, and the whole country swarms with vermin, reptiles, and insects, venomous and harmless.

The population of Tongkin is said to be much greater than in any other part of the Anamese empire, notwithstanding that it suffered so severely during the civil wars. Recent accounts (but little dependence can be placed on them) carry the computation as high as eighteen millions, while that of Cochin China is stated by the missionaries at only six millions. It is, however, unquestionably, the most populous and the richest province of the empire. Owing to the redundant population, vast numbers labour under the most extreme indigence; and it is computed, that one-tenth of the inhabitants of Lower Tongkin live constantly on the water. The mountains bordering on China, called Kaubang, are inhabited by the Quan-to, an ancient race, (as the name imports,) who regard themselves as the original possessors of the country, and consider the Anamese as intruders. Their language is said to be essentially different from the Anam, (called *Juan* by the Siamese and Malays,) which appears to be an original monosyllabical language.*

* The Anamese employ several sounds, in particular *b*, *d*, and *r*, which are incapable of being pronounced by a Chinese.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

Our chief guides in the topographical description of such parts of the empire as have been visited by modern travellers, will be Mr. Barrow, who visited Cochin China in 1793; Lieut. White, of the United States navy, who made a voyage to Saigon in 1819; and Mr. Finlayson, who attended Mr. Crawfurd in his mission to the court of Hué in 1822.

VOYAGE UP THE DON-NAI RIVER.

The reader has already been conducted from the Gulf of Siam to the mouth of the Don-nai or Saigon river, which appears to bear in fact the same relation to the Mei-kong or Cambodia river, that the Rangoon river does to the Irrawaddy.* Including its meanderings, it is a distance of nearly sixty miles from Cape St. James to the city of Sai-gon. After passing Daijang point and the opposite village of Canjeo, the river gradually contracts to the breadth of half a mile, till, at about nine miles up, it expands into a large sheet of water, bearing the appearance of a capacious estuary, its surface rippled by the conflicting currents of the numerous streams which here flow into the Don-nai. This is Nga-bay, called by the Portuguese

* The river of Cambodia (by the Malays written *Camboetsja*, and pronounced *Cambootja*) "falls into the sea by three mouths; that of Sai-gong, which, according to the missionaries, is more particularly called the river of Cambodia; one called the Japanese river, from being frequented by the junks of Japan; (the proper name is the *Bassak*;) and a third, the *Mat-siam*, which the Dutch have called the *Onbequame*, or the Inconvenient. The tides extend a great way up this river; and it is said that a great lake or inland sea is connected with these mouths. The inundations take place in June. The beds of the two western channels are full of low islands and sand-banks, which render them unfit for being navigated by large vessels."—Malte Brun, vol. iii. p. 381. Lieut. White says, that the Anamese call Cambodia *Cou-maigne*.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

Sete Bocas (seven mouths), from the fact of so many entrances to the different rivers being visible from a certain point, "presenting long vistas fringed with foliage of different shades of verdure, like so many radii from a centre." The scene is described as highly beautiful. While crossing this noble basin, Lieut. White's attention was attracted by a curious and unexplained phenomenon. "Our ears," he says, "were saluted by a variety of sounds, resembling the deep bass of an organ, accompanied by the hollow guttural chant of the bull frog, and the tones which imagination would give to an enormous Jew's harp. This combination produced a thrilling sensation on the nerves, and, as we thought, a tremulous motion in the vessel. On going into the cabin, I found the noise, which I soon ascertained proceeded from the bottom of the vessel, increased to a full and uninterrupted chorus. The sensations it produced, were similar to those of a torpedo or electric eel; but, whether these feelings were caused by the concussion of sound, or by actual vibrations in the body of the vessel, I could neither then nor since determine. In a few moments, the sounds, which had commenced near the stern of the vessel, became general throughout the whole length of the bottom. Our linguist informed us, that our admiration was caused by a shoal of fish, of a flat oval form, like a flounder, which, by a certain conformation of the mouth, possesses the power of adhesion to other objects in a wonderful degree; and that they are peculiar to the Seven Mouths. Whether the noises were produced by any peculiar construction of the sonorific organs, or by spasmodic vibrations of the body, he was ignorant. Very shortly, after leaving the basin, a sensible diminution was perceived in the number of our musical fellow-voyagers;

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

and before we had proceeded a mile, they were no more heard."

The stream now contracts to the breadth of about two furlongs, and the current is very rapid; the general depth is from eight to fifteen fathoms in the middle, and from three to nine close to the bank; the bottom a soft ooze throughout. "The principal precaution necessary in navigating the Don-nai," Lieut. White remarks, "is, to have boats a-head of the ship, to tow in calm or light winds, to prevent her being drawn into the mouths of the numerous streams which communicate with it, and to assist in guiding her among the various intersecting currents thereby produced." No variation, thus far, is observable in the features of the country. Nothing beyond the banks of the river is visible from the deck, but from the mast-head might be perceived to the eastward, the rugged promontory of Cape St. James, and the lofty mountain of Baria, towering high above the dark line of unbounded forests which, in every other direction, mingled with the horizon. Thousands of monkeys and birds of the most beautiful plumage are the tenants of the woods. At night, the mosquitoes were found intolerable. About twelve miles above the mouth of the principal branch of the Dong-thrang river, and about half-way between Canjeo and Saigon, is the only dangerous shoal in the Don-nai river; it is composed of hard coral rocks, which stretch out from the eastern bank about half way across the river for the distance of more than a mile, having three feet water on it at the lowest ebb.* It is the haunt of innumerable alligators. Beyond this shoal,

* Of this nature, probably, are the cataracts which the Dutch envoy Wusthof met with in the upper part of the Mei-kong.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

another large branch of the river joins the main stream. A short distance higher up, the prospect expands, and presents, on the left, another stream equally capacious with the Don-nai itself, called the river of Soirap. In front, and separated from it by the distance of a mile, is seen the majestic *Rio Grande*, (as the Portuguese have named it,) of which the Soirap is a branch. The latter is shallow and unnavigable for ships. Being very rapid, and forming an oblique angle with the great river, it produces strong and dangerous eddies in this part, and has formed a mud-bank on the eastern side of the main stream. Within a short distance of the city, scattered cottages and patches of cultivated ground, fishing-boats, and a distant forest of masts, gave the first indications of human habitations which they had observed during the whole voyage from Canjeo, except a few huts on one spot where a few acres had been cleared of jungle. The banks are mostly covered with mangrove. *

SAIGON.

THE city of Sai-gon, the capital of the province of Don-nai (or Tsiampa), is one of the most important and flourishing places in the empire. Here the late king constructed a naval arsenal. There are, in fact, two cities here, "each of them," Mr. Finlayson says, "as large as the capital of Siam." They are above a

* Mr. Finlayson, alluding, perhaps, to the same spot, says: "We observed no cultivation until we were within twenty or thirty miles of the town." He ascended the river in a barge. They continued to row all night, and reached Saigon in fifteen hours. The fishing-boats frequently make a passage from the sea to Saigon in one tide. The American vessel was between six and seven days in accomplishing the navigation.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

mile apart. That which is more recently built, is called Bingeh ;* the other is Saigon. Lieut. White gives the following description of both towns as they appeared in 1819 :—

" The city of Saigon is situated on a point formed by a confluence of two branches of the Donnai river, and occupies about six miles of the north bank. The population is dense near the river, but scattered at a short distance from it. The houses are built principally of wood, thatched with palm-leaves or rice-straw, and are of one story ; some few are of brick, and covered with tiles. Those of the higher classes have hanging chambers, built under the roof-tree, about ten feet wide, extending the whole length of the building, with wooden gratings on each side for air, to which they ascend by ladders ; they are surrounded with a court, with a gate towards the street. The dwellings of the poor are situated in the streets, and generally present a miserable appearance. The streets are regularly laid out, generally intersecting each other at right angles, and some of them are quite spacious.*

In the western part of the city, are two Chinese pagodas ; and they have a great number of these temples in various parts of the city. In a central situation is a Christian church, over which two Italian missionaries preside, who have several disciples and

* Mr. Finlayson says : " The houses are large, very wide, and for the climate very comfortable. The roof is tiled, and supported on handsome large pillars, of a heavy, durable black wood called *sao*. The walls are formed of mud, enclosed in frames of bamboo, and plastered. The floor is boarded, and elevated several feet from the ground. The houses are placed close to each other, disposed in straight lines, along spacious and well-aired streets, or on the banks of canals. The plan of the streets is superior to that of many European capitals."—p. 304.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

many converts. The number of Christians in Cochin China is 70,000; of which number, according to the viceroy and the missionaries, the division of Don-nai contains 16,000; they are all Roman Catholics. The city of Saigon is said to contain 180,000 inhabitants, of which about 10,000 are Chinese.

"Equidistant from the extremities of the city, near the bank of the river, are the magazines of rice; which is a regal monopoly, the exportation being prohibited on pain of decapitation. The ground is occupied in the northern part of the city, for the space of two miles, by about three-fifths of a mile square, as a repository for the dead. This immense cemetery is filled with tombs, built, like those of the Chinese, in the form of a horse shoe: its borders are planted, as are many of the streets in the suburbs, with the palmaria-tree. In the north-eastern part of the city, on the banks of a deep creek, are the navy-yard and naval arsenal. This establishment does more honour to the Anamese than any other object in their country; indeed, it may vie with many of the naval establishments in Europe. The ship timber and planks excelled any thing I had ever seen.* There were about 150 galleys, of most beautiful construction, hauled up under sheds; they were from 40 to 100 feet long, some of them mounting sixteen guns of three pounds calibre; others mounted four or six guns each, of from four to twelve pounds calibre; all of brass, and most beautiful pieces. There were also about forty galleys

* One plank which Lieutenant White measured, was 109 feet long, more than four inches thick, and perfectly square to the top, where it was two feet wide; it was sawed out of the trunk of a teak-tree, which here attains a most extraordinary magnitude. It is not unusual to see trees that would make a natural main-mast for a line of battle ship, clear of knots.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

afloat, most of them decorated with gilding and carved work, presenting a very animated and pleasing spectacle.

" The city of Saigon was formerly confined to the western extremity of its present site. The part now called old Saigon, bears much greater marks of antiquity, and exhibits a superior style of architecture. Some of the streets are paved with flags; and the quays, of stone and brick-work, extend nearly a mile along the river. Since the civil wars have terminated, the tide of population has flowed rapidly to the eastward, till it has produced one continued city, which has spread itself on the opposite bank of the streams on which it is situated, and surrounds the citadel and naval arsenal. From the western part of the city, a river or canal has been recently cut, to the distance of twenty-three English miles, connecting with the Meikong, by which a free water communication is opened with Cambodia. This canal is twelve feet deep throughout, and about 80 feet wide. It was cut through immense forests and morasses, in the short space of six weeks: twenty-six thousand men were employed night and day, by turns, in this stupendous undertaking, and 7000 lives were sacrificed by fatigue and consequent disease. The banks of this canal are already planted with the palmaria-tree, which is a great favourite with the Anamese.

" The site of the citadel of Saigon is the first elevated land which occurs in the river, after leaving Cape St. James, and this is about 60 feet above the level of the river: it was formerly a natural conical mound, covered with wood. The grandfather of the present monarch caused the top to be taken off and levelled, and a deep moat to be sunk, surrounding the whole, which was supplied with water from the river

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

by means of a canal; it is most admirably situated for defence, and would be capable of standing a long siege against even an European army.*

"The surrounding country is irriguous, and the city is intersected in various parts by creeks, over which are thrown bridges, each being a single plank of immense magnitude. Saigon is within a few miles of the head of the ship-navigation of the river Don-nai; it is there interrupted by shoals and sand-banks, but is navigable for small craft for a great distance inland. This is also the case with the stream washing the southern borders of the city, which, with the new river, connects the Cambodia and Don-nai rivers."

MANNERS AND CUSTOMS.

In their description of the appearance and character of the natives, the American lieutenant and the British surgeon are unaccountably at variance. The former speaks of "men, women, children, swine, and mangy dogs, equally filthy and miserable in appearance." The women, he describes as "coarse, dingy, and devoid of decency;" and the "rude curiosity" of the crowd by which they were annoyed, they were frequently obliged to chastise with their canes. "The young females of Cochin China," he says, "are frequently handsome, and some even beautiful, before their teeth, tongue, gums, and lips become stained

* "This fortress is furnished with a regular glacis, a wet ditch, and a high rampart, and commands the whole country. It is of a square form, and each side is about half a mile in extent. It is in an unfinished state, no embrasures being made, nor cannon mounted on the rampart. The zig-zag is very short, the passage into the gate straight; the gates are handsome, and ornamented in the Chinese style." Finlayson, p. 312. The fortifications of Saigon were constructed in 1790, by Colonel Victor Oliver.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

with their detestable masticatory; the children of both sexes, however, begin this practice at a very early age. They are by nature finely formed; but their symmetrical proportions are distorted and disguised by their dirty habits: * a woman at thirty is an object of disgust, and, at forty, is absolutely hideous." Their traders are charged universally with meanness, fraud, and villany; and Cochin China is pronounced the least desirable country for mercantile adventurers.†

Mr. Finlayson, who would naturally compare the appearance and manners of the people with those of

* In their persons, the Cochin Chinese are, on all hands, admitted to be not a cleanly people. Many of their customs are extremely disgusting. Those ablutions so much practised by all the western Asiatics, are unknown among them; and their dress is not washed from the time it is first put on, till it is no longer fit for use. In their food, they are any thing but nice, eating mice, rats, frogs, worms, and other vermin; and the entrails of pigs, fowls, deer, &c. are broiled and eaten, with no other cleansing than slightly rinsing them. Putrid meat and fish are generally preferred to sweet. Fresh eggs are despised; those that have become to a certain degree putrid, fetch thirty per cent more in the market; and if they contain young ones, they are still more highly esteemed. Among the numerous dishes sent to Mr. Crawfurd by the king, while they were at Hué, were two plates of hatched eggs, containing young that were already fledged; and they were assured that this was meant as a compliment, it being considered as a great delicacy. The Tongkinese are equally gross in their food. Horse-flesh is exposed for sale. Dogs are esteemed a delicacy. Monkeys, grasshoppers, lizards, mountain-rats, and snakes are also eaten. Maybugs deprived of their heads and intestines, and silk-worms fried, are a *bonne-bouche*. Milk, butter, and cheese are their aversion.

† That Lieutenant White, disappointed in his sugar-speculation, viewed every thing with a jaundiced eye, is very evident. "In vain," he says, "does the traveller look for *glazed windows*, so indispensable for the comfort of a European. The clumsy wooden shutters must be thrown open for light!" His expectations seem to have been the more unreasonable, as there are parts of the United States in which this indispensable comfort cannot be enjoyed.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

the Siamese, whom he had so recently visited, describes them in much more favourable terms. "The manners of the people" (of Kan-dyu or Cangeo), he says, "were in general polite, I might say refined; they were kind, attentive, and obliging; they courted, rather than shunned our society, and seemed to have less of the weakness or ostentation of natural pride than any of the tribes we had yet met. Their curiosity was naturally excited by the contrast which they could not but draw between themselves and us; but in the gratification of this feeling, or in its expression, was neither coarseness nor absence of good breeding; and the greatest liberty they ventured to assume, was that of simply touching our dress, with the design, I presume, of ascertaining the materials of its texture, they themselves having little notion of any other fit for this purpose than silk, in which all ranks are almost exclusively clothed.

"They are good-natured, polite, attentive, and indulgent to strangers. Their manners are agreeable, and they are, for the most part, found in a lively, playful humour, and strongly disposed to indulge in mirth. They are the gayest of Orientals; yet, the transition from mirth to sorrow and the more hateful and mean passions, seems to cost them nothing; it is as rapid as it is unaccountable, insomuch that to a stranger their conduct appears quite unreasonable as well as fickle. Like the monkey race, their attention is perpetually changing from one object to another. The houses are large and comfortable, constructed in general with mud walls, and roofed with tiles. The palm-leaf is but little used. The interior disposition of the house is somewhat peculiar. About one half forms an open hall, in which they receive visiters, transact business, and, if shopkeepers, dispose their

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

wares. In the back part of this hall is placed an altar, with other emblems of religion. The private apartments are disposed in recesses behind; these are in the form of square chambers, open on one side only. Their beds are formed of a bench, raised about a foot, and covered with mats.

" The costume of the Cochin Chinese is more convenient than elegant. In both sexes it is much alike, consisting of two or more loose gowns with long sleeves, reaching to the knee, and buttoned close round the neck. Beneath this, they wear a pair of wide pantaloons, and, on occasions of ceremony, persons of distinction throw a large black mantle of flowered silk over the whole. The head is covered with a turban of crape; that of the men is in general black. Over the turbans, females wear a large hat, similar to a basket. Dress is, with all ranks, an object of great attention; even the poorest among them are clothed from head to foot, and the populace thus make a more decent and respectable appearance than other eastern nations."

Again, at Saigon, the crowd conducted themselves with order, decency, and respect, as pleasing as it was novel; a numerous guard of soldiers, however, armed with lances, were then present. All of the people were dressed, the greater part in a very comfortable manner. Their small stature, combined with the rotundity of their face and the liveliness of their features, was very striking. An early visit to the market-places served to confirm the observations which the author had made on the manners of the people. The Cochin Chinese cannot, he says, be considered as in any way handsome; " yet, among the females, there are many that are even handsome as well as remark-

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

ably fair; and their manners are engaging, without possessing any of that looseness of character which, according to the relation of French travellers, prevails among this people." More regard, however, it is admitted, is paid to decorum than to chastity; at least among the unmarried females, who are liable to no disgrace or stigma in consequence of conduct held infamous in civilised society, and for which, after marriage, they would even there be punishable.

"Here, as in Siam, the more laborious occupations are often performed by women, and the boats upon the river are in general rowed by them. A practice, as ungallant as it is unjust, prevails both here and in Siam; that of making females only to pay for being ferried across rivers, the men passing always free. The reason alleged for the practice is, that the men are all supposed to be employed on the king's service. It is lamentable to observe how large a proportion of the men in this country are employed in occupations that are totally unproductive to the state, as well as subversive of national industry. Every petty mandarin is attended by a multitude of persons."

"Such commodities as are used by the natives, were to be found in great abundance in every bazar. No country, perhaps, produces more betel or areca-nut than this; betel-leaf less abundantly. Fish, salted and fresh; sweet potatoes, of excellent quality; Indian corn; the young shoots of the bamboo, prepared by boiling; rice, in the germinating state; coarse sugar; plantains, oranges, pumeloes, custard-apples, pomegranates, and tobacco were to be had in the greatest quantity. Pork is sold in every bazar, and poultry of an excellent description is very cheap. Alligator's flesh is held in great esteem, and our Chinese inter-

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

preter states that dog's flesh is sold here. The shops are of convenient size, in which the wares are disposed to the best advantage. One circumstance it was impossible to overlook, as it exhibits a marked difference of taste and manners in this people from that of the nations of India. Articles of European manufacture have, amongst the latter, in many instances, usurped the use of their own; and you can scarcely name any thing of European manufacture which is not to be had in the bazars. Here, with the sole exception of three or four case bottles, of coarse glass, there was no article whatever to be found that bore the least resemblance to any thing European. A different standard of taste prevails. A piece of cotton cloth was scarcely to be seen. Crapes, satins, and silks are alone in use, the greater number of them the manufacture of China or of Tongkin, there being, in fact, little or no manufacturing industry here. The articles which they themselves had made, were not numerous. I may specify the following: handsome and coarse mats, matting for the sails of boats and junks, coarse baskets, gilt and varnished boxes, umbrellas, handsome silk purses, in universal use, and carried both by men and women, iron nails, and a rude species of scissors. Every thing else was imported from the surrounding countries. In exchange, their territory affords rice in abundance, cardamoms, pepper, sugar, ivory, betel, &c. There are a few wealthy Chinese who carry on an extensive trade here; the bulk of the people are miserably poor, and but few amongst them are in a condition to trade but upon the most limited scale. Few of the shops in the bazars appear to contain goods of greater value than might be purchased for forty or sixty dollars, and the greater number are not worth half that sum. It is difficult to conceive that a population so extensive

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

can exist together in this form, with trade on so small a scale."

Nothing could exceed the civility and hospitality with which Mr. Crawfurd and the other gentlemen who accompanied him were treated both by the mandarins and the people of Saigon; they were entertained with shows and plays, and a fight between a tiger and an elephant was got up for their special amusement. Such a scene would not have been tolerated in the dominions of his majesty the white elephant. The combat was most unequal; the tiger was muzzled, and his claws had been torn out; yet, the first elephant was wounded and put to flight. At length, the tosses which the tiger received at the tusks of his successive antagonists, (their trunks being cautiously rolled up under the chin,) terminated his life. When he was perfectly dead, an elephant was brought up, who, instead of raising him on his tusks, seized him with his trunk and threw him to the distance of thirty feet.

After Mr. Finlayson had visited Turon Bay and the capital, and further intercourse with the natives had brought to light additional traits of character, and given him an opportunity of gaining a more intimate knowledge of their physical form and habits, he thus sums up his observations:—

"In point of stature, the Cochin Chinese are, perhaps, of all the various tribes that belong to this race, the most diminutive. We remarked, that they want the transverse breadth of face of the Malays, the cylindrical form of the cranium, as well as the protuberant and expanded coronoid process of the lower jaw of the Siamese, and the oblique eyes of the Chinese. In common with all of these, they have a scanty, grisly, straggling beard; coarse, lank, black

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

hair; small, dark eyes; a yellowish complexion; a squat, square form; and stout extremities."*

"The globular form of the cranium, and the orbicular shape of the face, are peculiarly characteristic of the Cochin Chinese. The head projects more backwards than in the Siamese; it is smaller, and more symmetrical in regard to the body, than in the tribes already noticed; and the transverse diameters, both of the occiput and the sinciput, are very nearly equal. The forehead is short and small, the cheeks round, the lower part of the face broad. The whole countenance is, in fact, very nearly round; and this is more particularly striking in the women, who are reckoned beautiful in proportion as they approach this form of face. The eyes are small, dark, and round. They want the tumid, incumbent eyelid of the Chinese; and hence they derive a sprightliness of aspect unknown to the latter. The nose is small, but well formed. The mouth is remarkably large; the lips are prominent, but not thick. The beard is remarkably scanty, yet they cultivate it with the greatest care. There are amongst them those who can number scarcely one dozen of hairs upon the chin, or on the whole of the lower jaw. That on the upper lip is somewhat more abundant. The neck is for the most part short. Before quitting this part of the subject, I may remark, that there is in the form of the head a degree of beauty, and in the expression of the countenance a degree of harmony, sprightliness, intelligence, and good humour, which we

* Of twenty-one persons, taken chiefly from the class of soldiers, the average height was five feet three inches. Few are of a very black complexion. Many of the females, in particular, are stated to be as fair as the generality of the inhabitants of the south of Europe.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

should look for in vain either in the Chinese or the Siamese.

" The shape of the body and limbs in the Cochin Chinese, differs but little from that of the tribes already noticed. The chest is short, large, and well expanded; the loins broad; the upper extremities are long, but well formed; the lower are short, and remarkably stout. There is this remarkable difference from the others of the same race, that here the tendency to obesity is of rare occurrence. The limbs, though large, are not swollen with fat. The muscular system is large and well developed, and the leg in particular is almost always large and well formed. The Cochin Chinese, though a laughing, are not a fat people.

" Though living in not merely a mild, but a warm climate, the partiality for dress is universal. There is no one, however mean, but is clothed at least from the head to the knee. Nor is it comfort and convenience alone that they study: they are not above the vanity of valuing themselves on the smartness of their dress, — a failing which often leads them into extravagance. The principal and most expensive article in their dress is the turban. That of the men is made of black crape, that of the women of blue. On occasions of mourning, it is made of white crape.

" A loose jacket, somewhat resembling a large shirt, but with wide sleeves, reaching nearly to the knee, and buttoning on the right side, constitutes the principal covering of the body. Two of these, the under one of white silk, are generally worn, and they increase the number according to their circumstances and the state of the weather. Women wear a dress but little different from this, though lighter, and both wear a pair of wide pantaloons of various colours.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

The dress of the poorer class is made of coarse cotton, but this is not very common, coarse silks being more in vogue. Those of China and Tongkin are worn by the more opulent classes. Shoes also are worn only by the wealthy, and are of Chinese manufacture; clogs, in fact, rather than shoes."*

The Tongkinese wear a lŏng robe reaching to the heels, tied with a girdle or sash. Persons of rank have a robe of silk, and a cap of the same material. The lower classes wear the large Cochin Chinese hat. While subject to China, the Tongkinese were compelled to tuck up their hair in token of subjection. On recovering their independence, both sexes adopted the custom of letting it hang over their shoulders; a practice which the close-shaven bonzes, however, discountenance and ridicule.

Mr. Finlayson describes the Cochin Chinese as a nation almost without any religion whatever: "at all events, they derive no moral feeling from this source." Yet, he elsewhere remarks, that "in every house, and every building, whether public or private, even in the slightest temporary sheds, is placed something to remind you of religion, or, to speak more accurately, of the superstitious disposition of the people. And as the emblems of this nature have, for the most part, a brilliant appearance, they produce a striking effect." They have, however, neither religious instructors nor priests. In vain do we look here for the rhahaans of Birmah, or the talapoins of

* The lower orders sometimes wear a jacket made of palm-leaves closely sewed together, having the appearance of a shaggy skin; a hat, between two and three feet in diameter, shaped like a basket, comes down over the shoulders; and, thus protected, they suffer little inconvenience from the rains.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

Siam.* Although Fo is an object of worship, the traces of Buddhism are much fainter and more indistinct here, than in the other Indo-Chinese kingdoms. They do not appear to believe in metempsychosis. The better sort, Mr. Finlayson says, affect to follow the precepts of Confucius. The adoration of ancestors seems, however, to be the most prevalent superstition; and this the government is said to foster. The more barbarous rites of the aborigines, who worshipped the elephant, the dog, and the tiger, are not yet extinct.† In general, if religion is ever thought of, "it consists in the ceremony of placing on a rude altar, some bits of meat and a few straws covered with the dust of scented wood; or in scattering to the winds a few scraps of paper covered with gold foil; or in sticking a piece of writing on a post, a door, or a tree."‡ You inquire, in vain, for the motives of

* In Tongkin, however, they have schools in every village, in which children are taught to read and write, but no superior colleges.

† Lieut. White explored a rude hovel, "dedicated to the evil spirit," erected on Dai-jang Point. It contained two apartments. "The entrance to the first room was from the platform, through a large doorway. It was about fifteen feet square. At the further end was a sort of table of hewn planks, on one side of which was seated a small wooden idol, with an elephant's proboscis, not unlike some of the objects of Hindoo worship, but of most rude and disproportionate manufacture. On the other side of the table was the model of a junk, about two and a half feet long; and on the table was placed a brazen censer, and an earthen vessel half filled with ashes, in which were stuck a number of matches, the upper ends of which had been burnt. Several other small images, mostly broken and otherwise mutilated, were lying about in confusion. The back room was of smaller dimensions, and contained no object of curiosity. In fact, the whole establishment was in a ruinous state, and appeared to be seldom visited."

‡ In the woods in the suburbs of Saigon, Lieut. White says, hat he frequently saw miniature houses erected on four posts, with

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

such acts. The objects of their fear are as numerous as they are hideous. One form of superstition is observed by seafaring people; another by those who live on the coast; and a third by those inhabiting agricultural districts.

"In a sequestered spot in the environs of the city," (Saigon,) says Lieut. White, "at the further end of a romantic pathway, amid the foliage of various kinds of beautiful trees, we arrived at the largest pagoda we had yet seen in the country, situated on a small mound, apparently artificial. It was of brick, covered with tile, and in a totally different style from others in the city. It bore traces of great antiquity, which, with its immense proportions, and a certain air of Gothic grandeur and druidical seclusion, were admirably calculated to inspire involuntary awe, and to render it a proper retreat for the most rigid ascetic. An old priest with a grey beard, but not otherwise distinguishable from the laity, accompanied by a young aspirant, advanced a few steps to meet us, and received us with great appearance of cordiality; and, when informed by the linguist that our object was curiosity to see the temple, he readily proceeded to gratify us. In front of the pile were suspended four bells of different sizes and tones, and of the form, and arranged in the manner, heretofore mentioned. We entered by a door near the eastern angle, and were ushered into a small apartment, where were suspended from the walls several articles of clothing, which appeared to be the vestments of the priests. From this, by a side door, we entered a spacious vestibule, separated from the nave of the church by a massy partition of polished wood in pannel work. In

an idol sitting in the interior, and offerings of fruit and cooked dishes placed before it.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

this place were three immense drums, mounted on frames, and on a table a small brass idol, with an elephant's proboscis, before which was a brazen censer filled with matches, one end of each of which had been burned. The priest then threw open a large door in the partition, and led the way into the body of the temple. There was no light besides what was admitted through the door by which we had entered, and that was barely sufficient to render 'darkness visible:' our eyes were, however, enabled to penetrate the gloom sufficiently to ascertain that its interior proportions were commensurate with the idea that we had formed from its exterior. Several groupes of idols, of hideous, and some of colossal proportions, were visible through the dim twilight that pervaded the temple, and seemed to render them still more hideous and unearthly. In fact, the recollections of this exhibition are more like the traces of an indistinct and feverish dream, than reality. It would be as futile to attempt any description of the various monstrosities in this pantheon of pagan divinities, as it would be to repeat their several genealogies, histories, exploits, &c., as delivered to us by the priest, through the medium of Polonio. Their divinities, however, were not treated with any great veneration by these guardians of the temple. 'This fellow,' the old priest would say, taking hold of the hoof of an ox on the bust of a man with an elephant's head, 'was famous for his gallantries; and this one, tweaking a tremendous nose on a human head, stuck upon the body of what appeared to be intended for a tiger, 'was celebrated for destroying wild beasts;' and his history of the capricious amours of some of their deities, no longer excited any wonder at the production of these anomalies.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

"A more direct engine," continues Mr. Finlayson, "than that of religion itself, has modified, if not formed, the moral character of the people; it is that of an avaricious, illiberal, and despotic government, the effect of which, so sedulously pursued through a course of ages, it is melancholy and revolting to human nature to contemplate. It has involved the whole body of the people in perpetual and insurmountable poverty; it has debased the mind; it has destroyed every generous feeling; it has crushed in the bud the early aspirations of genius; it has cast a blasting influence over every attempt at improvement. Such being the character of the government, it will not appear surprising that the moral character of the people should in many respects be brutalised. What is defective in their character, has been occasioned by perpetual slavery and oppression; yet, notwithstanding all this, they display traits of moral feeling, ingenuity, and acuteness, which, under a liberal government, would seem capable of raising them to an elevated rank amongst nations. But they are perpetually reminded of the slavery under which they exist; the bamboo is constantly at work, and every petty paltry officer, every wretch who can claim precedence over another, is at liberty to inflict lashes on those under him. But the tameness with which they submit to this degrading discipline, alike applicable to the people as to the military, is the most extraordinary circumstance. Their obedience is unlimited, nor do they, by word or by action, manifest the slightest resistance to the arbitrary decisions of their tyrants. It will not appear surprising that this system should render them cunning, timid, deceitful, and regardless of truth; that it should make them conceited, impudent, clamorous, assuming, and tyrannical, where they imagine they can be so with impunity.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

Their clamorous boldness is easily seen through, and the least opposition or firmness reduces them to the meanest degree of submission and fawning.

" Such are the more revolting traits in their character; they are in a great measure counterbalanced by a large share of others that are of a more amiable stamp. They are mild, gentle, and inoffensive in their character, beyond most nations. Though addicted to theft, the crime of murder is almost unknown amongst them.* To strangers, they are affable, kind, and attentive; and in their conduct, they display a degree of genuine politeness and urbanity quite unknown to the bulk of the people in other parts of India. They are, besides, lively and good-humoured, playful and obliging. Towards each other, their conduct is mild and unassuming; but the omission of accustomed forms or ceremonies, the commission of the slightest fault, imaginary or real, is followed by immediate punishment. The bamboo is the universal antidote against all their failings.

" The Cochin Chinese are more industrious than we should be apt to suspect, considering the oppressive nature of the government. Where the government interferes but little, as in the fisheries on the coast, their industry is indeed very conspicuous, and there seems every reason to believe that, were they freed from oppression, they would be equally so in other branches. They are capable of supporting a large share of fatigue; and the quantum of daily labour, as for instance in the operation of rowing, or of running, is in general very considerable. But the greatest obstacle to the development of industry proceeds from the oppressive

* Lieutenant White says, that murders are now by no means unfrequent, especially by poison.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

nature of the military system, by which about two-thirds of the male population are compelled to serve as soldiers, at a low and inadequate rate of pay. Of all the grievances they labour under, it would appear that they consider this the most oppressive. It not only takes from agriculture and other occupations, the hands necessary for such labours, but by the idle habits which the military service generates in the men, it renders them unfit to return to that condition of life. The consequence of this system may easily be conjectured, though not perhaps to the full extent. Almost all kinds of labour are performed by women, whom it is not unusual to see guiding the plough and sowing the seed. Besides, the labour of women is paid for at an equal rate with that of the men. The daily wages for either is one *mas* and their food, or two *mas*, without it. Another great evil arising out of the military system of levy, consists in the destruction of family connexions and ties. From the age of seventeen to twenty, a selection of the youth is made for military service, from which there is no retiring until age or infirmity has rendered them incapable of further service. It is true that, from time to time, they are allowed to return to their homes on leave of absence; but it is to be feared that a temporary residence of this nature affords a feeble barrier to the unsocial tendency of the system."

In the administration of justice, the utmost venality prevails. All capital crimes, except adultery, are punished by decollation. In that case, the parties are bound together, back to back, and thrown off a bridge into the river. Theft, though a capital crime, is universally prevalent. Yet, the police is conducted on "an excellent plan," one of the most respectable inhabitants being made responsible for the good order

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

of every street. Riots and disturbances are consequently very rare. Minor crimes are punished by imprisonment, flagellation, and the *caungue*. Polygamy and concubinage are universal, and are under no restriction; but a man "seldom takes *more* than three wives, one of which is always paramount: the children of all are equally legitimate. The marriage-festival lasts, according to the rank and means of the parties, from three to nine days. Their colour for mourning is white. In their funerals and funereal fêtes, their magnificent coffins, the superstitious selection of particular spots for interment, and the festivals in honour of ancestors, the Anamese copy the Chinese, or perhaps discover an original affinity to that nation. Their dress, too, bears a general resemblance to that of the Chinese, prior to the Tâtar invasion. Like the Chinese, they have no real coin, except the brass (or *tutenague*) money called *sepecs* (*sapuca*), rather smaller than an English shilling, and very brittle: 60 sepecs make one *mace*, and 10 *mace* (600 sepecs) one *quan* or *khwan*. Both these are imaginary money. In 1764, a *quan* exchanged against a Spanish dollar, or two rupees. The value of 21 Spanish dollars in *sepecs* of tutenague, weighs 150 lbs. This currency, therefore, is most incommodious. Ingots of gold and silver, however, are the more common medium of exchange: their value as money is determined by an impression stamped upon them. Their weights have the same denomination as in China. The *cattee* is equal to a pound and a half English, and 100 *cattees* make a *picul* of 150 lbs. Their bushel is equal to 39 quarts.

We have thus brought together the substance of the information we possess relative to the Anamese, in this place, because most of the observations were collected at Saigon. From their vicinity to China, and the in-

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

timate connexion that has at different periods subsisted between the two countries, the Chinese character, as well as literature, has been extensively introduced; and whatever strongly-marked features of dissimilarity may originally have existed, have been softened down or effaced. The Chinese scattered about the kingdom, maintain, indeed, a distinctive character. "These industrious and enterprising people," says Mr. Finlayson, "are the butchers, the tailors, the confectioners, and the pedlars of Cochin China; they are met with in every bazar and in every street, with their elastic pole carried across their shoulders, at each end of which is suspended a basket filled with their various commodities;* they are also the bankers and money-changers, and a great part of the circulating medium of the country passes through their hands." But the superior industry of the Chinese, both in Cochin China and in Siam, is partly accounted for by their exemption from the military conscription. In Cochin China, every man is a soldier, and even the commercial and mercantile operations, as well as all the native manufactures, are carried on by the women: they are the husbandmen, the mariners, and the merchants. Political causes have thus had a powerful influence on the national character. Nor do the Chinese differ more widely from the Anamese in the particulars referred to, than, in Spain, the Galician differs from the Murcian, or than tribes of the same family are often found to be distinguished in habits, dialect, and character.

The proper Anam written character is said greatly to resemble the Siamese. The language, in its construction, approaches nearer also to the Thay (or

* Some of them are itinerant cooks, who carry in this way various dishes ready-dressed for the table.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

Siamese) and the Malayu, than it does to the Chinese, although its vocabulary has borrowed more from the latter language, and bears little resemblance to that of Siam. In common with other monosyllabic languages, its essential poverty renders it necessary to use the primary monosyllables in a varying signification, determined solely by the accent; and a diversity of dialect is produced merely by a difference of accentuation. Thus, Dr. Leyden has given a list of sixteen languages spoken in China, the *Khunn*, or mandarin language, varying considerably from the *Kong-tong*, or language of Canton.* Whether the Anam may not be included among them, it is at present impossible to ascertain: he was inclined to consider it as wholly distinct and original.

We must now hasten to complete, so far as our materials will enable us, our topographical description.

From Saigon, Mr. Crawfurd proceeded to Turon Bay, which receives the waters of a river on which is situated the city of Fai-Foh, once the centre of the commerce of Cochin China.†

* Asiat. Res. vol. x. p. 267. Mr. Barrow declares that scarcely two provinces in China have the same colloquial language.

† "On arriving at Faifo, we were surprised to find the recent ruins of a large city, the streets laid out on a regular plan, paved with flat stone, and well-built brick houses on each side. But, alas! there was now little more remaining than the outward walls, within which, in a few places, you might behold a wretch who formerly was the possessor of a palace, sheltering himself from the weather in a miserable hut of straw and bamboos. Of the few edifices left entire, one was a wooden bridge built upon piles, over a narrow arm of the river, with a tiled roof. The temples and their wooden gods were no further molested than by being robbed of their bells, which, I understood the present usurper, with the purpose of coining them into money. The course of the river from Turon to Faifo was a little to the eastward of South." (The voyage occupied fourteen hours.)—CHAPMAN'S *Voyage to Cochin China*, 1778. *Asiatic Journ.* vol. iv. p. 15.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

Digitized by Google

Original from
UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

W. Alexander del. H. Adlard, sc.

COCHIN-CHINESE SHIPPING ON THE RIVER TAIFO.

London, Published by J. Duncan, Paternoster Row, June 1826.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

TURON.

THIS magnificent bay, which resembles a fine, tranquil lake, is surrounded almost entirely with bold and lofty hills, clothed with wood to their very summit. Compared, however, with the more luxuriant vegetation of the southern provinces, the aspect of the country is sterile, and the general effect, Mr. Finlayson describes as falling short of his expectation. Extensive sandy beaches surround the shore, except where they are rendered more bold by the projection of granitic rocks. In point of scenery, he says, it is greatly inferior to that of Trincomalee, to which the absence of cultivated land and the deficiency of human habitations assimilate it. Here and there, on the shores of the bay, are to be found the huts of a few wretched creatures who live by fishing; but neither the betel, nor the cocoa-nut, nor a palm of any description is to be seen, nor, except a few acres of rice-ground, any signs of agriculture. Every thing indicates an ungrateful soil. Yet, the great extent of the circular basin, the serrated tops of the mountain ridges, partially enveloped in mists, the number of Chinese junks and other boats that are always to be seen sailing to and fro, and the bold forms of a few rocks, confer upon this harbour a peculiar interest.*

* See the plate. Before the harbour, on a low peninsula, is a large mass of brown marble rocks, resembling, at a distance, a heap of ruins; and on the point is a remarkable rock, bearing a strong resemblance to a lion couchant, as if about to spring into the sea; and what renders the illusion more complete, the head, at the seat of the eye, is perforated. Turon Bay is in lat 16° 7′ N. The peninsular promontory of Turon (or Hansan), together with Callao Island, was the price demanded by France, in the treaty negotiated by Bishop Adran, for her assistance. This peninsula, Mr. Barrow observes, is to Cochin China, "what Gibraltar is to

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

Vast numbers of boats were seen plying off the coast in the open sea, indicating the existence of a numerous population. "These boats are in shape similar to those of the Malays, but are differently rigged, having a large square-shaped sail in the middle, and one, somewhat similar, at each end; at a distance they look like small ships. Several hundreds of them are sometimes in sight, all under sail. With scarcely a rag of clothes to cover them, without either house or home, other than that which their frail bark, covered with a sorry matting, affords, with a scanty supply of poor, and perhaps unwholesome food; in this way does a numerous, but wretched population lead a life of misery. The more barbarous of the *Orang Laut* are not more squalid or more wretched, than many of the fishing tribes that occupy the coasts of Cochin China. The facility with which subsistence, though a miserable one, is to be procured in this occupation, will account for the great numbers that are engaged in fishing. It requires no funds, and but little industry, to put a family in the way of providing for itself. Hence, every boat is for the most part the residence of a single family; and as the source from which they derive their subsistence it inexhaustible, there appears to be no limit to the increase of marriages amongst them. A man of ordinary industry is capable of construct-

Spain, with this difference in favour of the former, that, to its impregnability, it adds the important advantage of a convenient and well-sheltered port and harbour. On the peninsula is a sufficient extent of level surface for a small town, with a naval arsenal and magazines of every description; the whole capable of being rendered perfectly defensible by a handful of men. The small island of Callao, about thirty miles south of Turon Bay, completely commands the entrance to the river and city of Faifoe, the ancient mart for foreign commerce."—BARROW, p. 335.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

ing, with his own hands, the machinery and materials necessary for the existence of himself and family. Of these, the boat is the principal and an indispensable part; and here we observe a much cheaper and easier mode of constructing them than is generally adopted throughout these seas. The practice of hollowing out single trees must be painful, tedious, and difficult. The Cochin Chinese have substituted in its stead a sort of basket-work, of very close texture, of which they form both the bottom and the greater part of the sides of the boat. This close basket-work, or matting, is made of split rattans, and being stretched upon the frame, is well covered with pitch. The upper work is, however, formed of one or two planks, and the boat is further strengthened by a deck of the same materials. In the centre, there is a small space covered with matting, the sole accommodation of the occupiers; bamboos serve for masts; the bark of trees is made into tackling; a few mats, sewed together, are the only sails; all of which, as well as fishing-nets and lines, are made by every man for his own use. Thus equipped, they launch into the deep, carrying with them all that they possess, and wander from bay to bay in quest of a subsistence, which their squalid and wretched forms would lead us to believe to be precarious and inadequate. Though, for the most part, under the shelter of a bold and rocky coast, they are to be found at times far out at sea. The night and their idle time are invariably spent under the shade of trees, or on some sandy beach. Here they indolently saunter away their time, till necessity again calls for exertion. Their share of toil may be considered moderate, the structure of their boats being such as to admit of their sailing with all winds, and in every direction."

The village of Turon lies nearly three miles from

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

the usual place of anchorage. The approach is through an extensive shallow bank, guarded by a respectable fort. The houses appeared neat and clean, but there is little or no culture of any sort; the bazar is an indifferent one.

Two narrow barges, containing forty rowers each, but with very paltry accommodations, were sent from Hué, to convey the British Agent to the capital. It appears to have been the object of the Cochin Chinese government, to strip the mission from the Governor-general as much as possible of an imposing, or even a respectable appearance, that they might treat it accordingly; owing, at least in part, to his not being the bearer of any letter from the British monarch, but only from a viceroy.

HUÉ.

THE mouth of the river of Hué (or Hoa) is narrowed by extensive sand-banks. After passing the bar, on which there are between sixteen and eighteen feet at high water, you seem to have entered a vast fresh-water lake, and to be completely excluded from the sea. The scenery now becomes very interesting. Islands covered with cultivation are visible at a distance; several vast rivers appear to pour their waters into one basin; and thousands of boats are seen returning from or proceeding to sea. The city is about nine miles up the river, in lat. 16° 45′ N., long. 106° 32′ E. Here we must again avail ourselves of Mr. Finlayson's Narrative.

"The river is so much divided by islands of various dimensions, and so intersects the country in every way, that it is difficult to state more of its course, than its general direction, which is from west to east.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

In ascending the river to the Mandarin's, we soon quitted the branch which we first occupied, and turning to the right, entered a fine and wide canal, partly natural and partly artificial. This canal surrounds three sides of the capital, and, at both extremities, joins the great river, which lies in front of the fourth. The canal is about forty or fifty yards wide at its lowest part, where we entered; it becomes narrower as you ascend, and, at the upper extremity, it is little more than eighteen or twenty yards across. It is maintained in perfect order. The sides are regularly sloped, and supported by embankments where requisite. Its depth would appear to be, in most parts, about eight feet. It affords the double advantage of an outward defence of the place, — for which it was doubtless originally intended, as it bounds the glacis throughout its course, — and of water-conveyance to the various parts of an extensive city.

"We had seen little more than the bare walls of our habitation since our arrival. The most beautiful and luxuriant scenery now burst upon our view; and we soon agreed, that the banks of the river of Hué present the most beautiful and interesting scenery of any river we had seen in Asia. Its beauties, however, are the gifts of nature, more than of art. A vast expanse of water, conveyed by a magnificent river through a fertile valley, not so wide but that the eye can compass its several parts; ridges of lofty and bold mountains in the distance; the cocoa-nut, the areca, the banana, the sugar-cane; hedges of bamboos that wave their elegant tops in the air; and rows of that beautiful plant, the hibiscus; — are the principal materials which, grouped in various forms, delight the eye. From this, we must not separate the not less interesting prospect of numerous and apparently comfortable

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

villages. In these, the most remarkable circumstance is the neatness and cleanliness of the houses of the natives, and the cheerful, contented, and lively disposition of the people. The houses of the better sort are substantial and large, covered with tiles, the walls being partly made of brick and mortar, and partly of wood. Besides, they shew considerable taste in adorning their grounds and little gardens with flowers and ornamental trees.

" Though we were in the immediate vicinity of a large city, few people were to be seen: these were at work in the fields, collecting weeds from the canal, or passing on the roads. We were still more surprised to find so few boats upon the river; and of junks, we saw no more than three or four.....As soon as we had entered the canal, we found ourselves in front of one face of the fort. The term fort, however, is apt to convey erroneous notions of this place: it is, in fact, a fortified city; and if the French had compared it with such places as Delhi and Agra, instead of Fort William, the comparison had been more just. The fortifications are, without question, of a most extraordinary nature, whether considered in the magnitude of extent, the boldness of design, the perseverance in execution, or the strength which they display. The fort appears to be built with the greatest regularity, and according to the principles of European fortification. It is of quadrangular form; each side appeared to us to be at least a mile and a half in length.* The rampart is about thirty feet high, and cased with brick and mortar. The bastions project but little, containing from five to eight embrasures, and are placed

* The French mandarins told them, that the length of each side was 1,187 toises, and that the walls would contain 800 pieces of cannon.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

at a great distance from each other. The walls are in excellent order. We could not distinctly see whether there was a ditch at the foot of the wall, but were told that there is. The glacis extends to the canal, and is about 200 yards in breadth. An enemy on the opposite side of the canal would, in many parts, find shelter in the brushwood and hedges, and even villages, within reach of the guns of the fort, and thence would find the means of attacking the place with little exposure of his men. But it is not to be expected, that such places should be capable of much resistance. They may serve as a temporary defence against a sudden alarm, and against a tumultuary attack from irregular troops; but a handful of brave and enterprising men would soon possess themselves of the place. The gates are ornamented in the Chinese style, but the approaches are calculated for the purpose of defence. There appeared no reason to doubt that we were brought by this circuitous route, in order that we might see the extent of the fortifications."

Subsequently, they were permitted to see the interior. "On entering the gate, we turned to the right, and passed along the rampart. As much care has been bestowed on the construction of the interior as of the exterior. The place is laid out in quadrangles; the roads are wide and convenient; and a navigable canal, which leads to the granaries and magazines, passes through the place. The town, if it may be so called, is rather paltry: the greater part of the ground appears to be laid out in ill-cultivated gardens, attached to miserable, but probably only temporary huts. The bazars have an appearance of poverty; yet, the regularity of the streets gives an air of great neatness to the place, and the view both of the country and the town, from the rampart, is very fine. After passing for more than a

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

mile along the rampart, we were conducted to the public granaries, consisting of a vast number of well-built, substantial storehouses. The greatest attention has been bestowed upon every thing, and the powder-magazines are erected in the midst of tanks.

"The palace of the king is surrounded on every side with handsome and well-built rows of barracks. These were uncommonly clean, and very complete in their structure, and would lose little in comparison with the best we have in England.....The citadel is a small quadrangular building, with strong and lofty walls, close to the palace, not calculated to excite any peculiar interest."

Of the palace itself, they could see nothing, except on passing one or two of the gates, so completely is it concealed by the barracks. The display of iron and brass guns of all sorts and sizes, of mortars and ammunition, in the artillery department, was truly surprising. "It was easy to perceive," Mr. Finlayson says, "that the genius which had directed every thing was French, and that the master-mind which had created such great works, no longer presided over them."

The principal bazar at Hué consists of a spacious street about a mile in length, with shops on either side, —some of them paltry huts made of palm-leaves; the rest more substantially built of wood, with tiled or thatched roofs. The poverty of the shops was here very striking, and altogether, Hué and its inhabitants appeared to great disadvantage in comparison with the capital of Don-nai. There are few Chinese among the population, which is stated to amount to 30,000 souls. During the violent rains to which this part of Cochin China is subject, the town is liable to be speedily inundated; and people are seen moving about the streets

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

in boats, where, but the day before, they had passed on dry ground.

Our limits restrict us from entering into further details. Mr. Crawfurd could not succeed in obtaining an audience of the king of Cochin China. He was told, that his business being entirely of a commercial nature, it altogether precluded the possibility of his being admitted to the royal presence; that it was an affair for the cognizance of his ministers; that had he been the envoy of the king of England, or of any other king, he would have been presented at court; but that in his case, it was as if the governor of Saigon had sent an envoy to the imperial court. The presents of the Governor-general were politely declined by his majesty, and the mission was dismissed, not without evident manifestations of displeasure or contempt.*

Before many years, the British nation and the court and good people of Hué will be better acquainted with each other. His majesty has condescendingly promised to accept of whatever presents may be agreeable to him, *next time*, paying for the same. Who can tell but that, in a few years, we may have a British factory at Turon, steam-boats plying on the Saigon river, or even ascending the unknown course of the Mei-kong, and that a joint-stock company may be formed to work the gold mines of Tongkin!

* Mr. Crawfurd had suffered the letter from the Governor-general to be opened by the governor of Saigon, which evidently gave great offence. In 1804, Mr. Roberts, an envoy from the Governor-general, had been honourably received, and obtained two audiences of the king.

END OF ANAM.

Digitized by Google Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

ERRATA.

Page 78, line 14, *for* Brimans *read* Birmans.
95, line 5, *for* Binnah *read* Birmah.

J. MOYES, TEMPLE PRINTING OFFICE, BOUVERIE STREET.

Digitized by Google
Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

Digitized by Google

Original from
UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

Digitized by Google

Original from
UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

Digitized by Google

Original from
UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

Digitized by Google

Original from
UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

Digitized by Google

Original from
UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA LIBRARY

The return of this book is due on the date indicated below

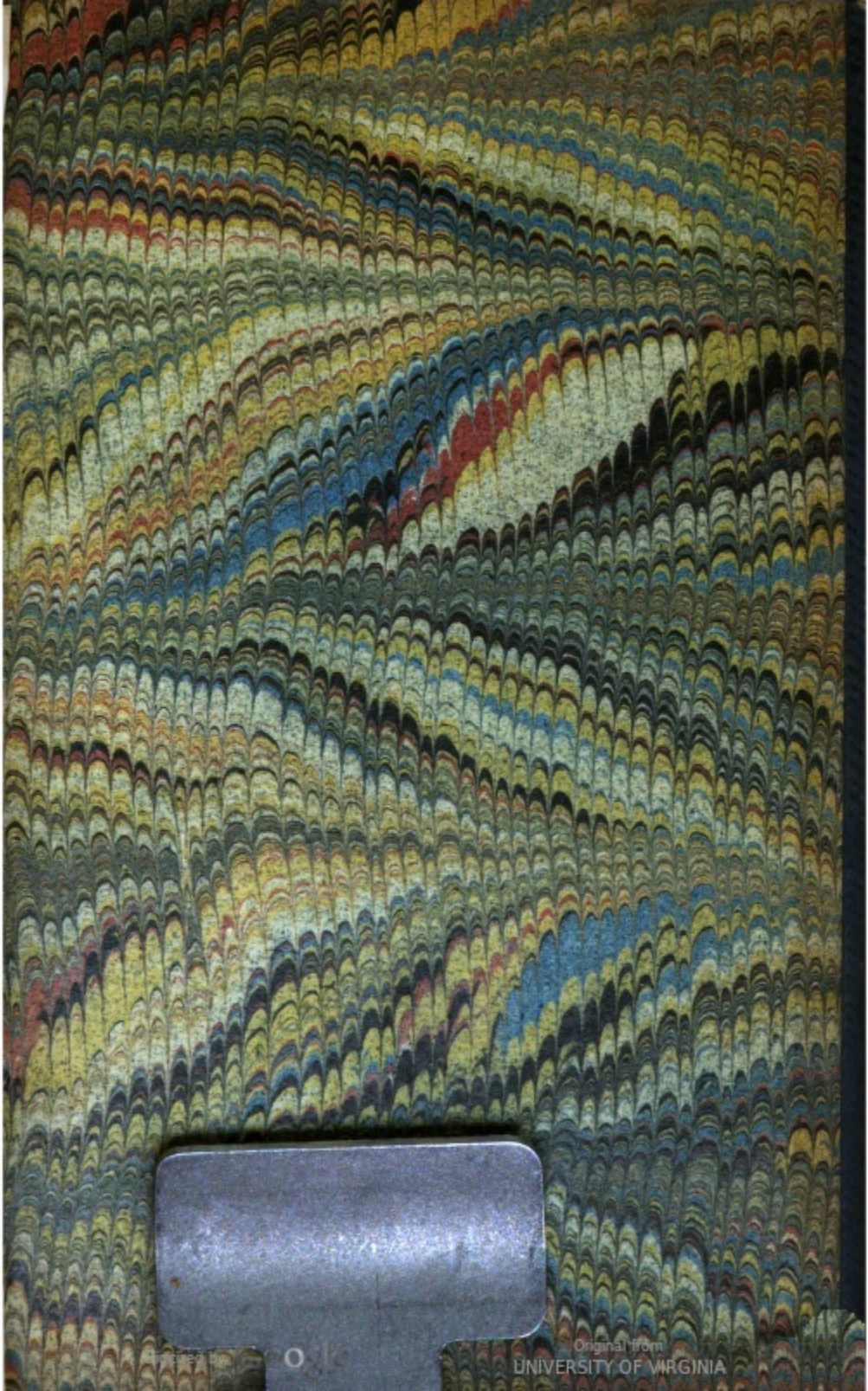
DUE	DUE
JUN 9 '37	
FEB 2 1966	

MICHIE CO

Usually books are lent out for ... but there ...

Digitized by Google

Original from UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA


Original from
UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

Digitized by Google
Original from
UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA